

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Mabel Kozuki, 78, retired Dole Company (Hawaiian Pine Company) head forelady

Mabel (Mamiya) Kozuki, Japanese, was born in Palama on February 21, 1901. She was the fifth of nine children. Her parents were emigrants from Fukuoka, Japan. Her father drove a hack and later opened a small hotel on Liliha Street.

Mabel attended Kaiulani School through the eighth grade. For seven years, she also attended the Fort Street Hongwanji Japanese School.

When Mabel was 13 years old in 1914, she began working at Hawaiian Pine Company during the summers. This continued until 1918 when she was made a packing forelady and an intermittent. In the summer of 1923, Hapco began nighttime operations, and Mabel was made head forelady of the night shift. Off-season, when there was only the day shift, she became a section head (assistant to the head forelady).

In 1924, Mabel married Iutaka Kozuki, a foreman in the cannery, who later worked for Schuman Carriage Company. A son was born in 1929, so Mabel worked only on the day shift until her son was 1-1/2 to 2 years old. Then she once again worked the night shift as head forelady. In about 1937 or 1938, she was made head forelady of the day shift, but she was still an intermittent worker until 1946. At that time, Mabel became a regular, salaried worker. She retired in 1966.

Mabel has lived at her present home since 1952. Her husband passed away in 1971. Her pastimes include gardening and crocheting.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
Mabel Kozuki (MK)
February 21, 1979
Kaimuki, Oahu
BY: Vivien Lee (VL)

VL: This is an interview with Mrs. Mabel Kozuki. Today is February 21, 1979, and we're at her home in Kaimuki.

Maybe you can tell me, just for the record, first of all, where and when you were born?

MK: I was born Palama, February 21, 1901.

VL: While you were growing up and going to school, what did your mother and father do for a living?

MK: My mother was a housewife, and my father was driving a--they call "hack," those days.

VL: Who else lived with your family, at that time, when you were growing up? Did anyone else besides your brothers and sisters live with you?

MK: No. Just all family.

VL: So the money that your father made from driving hack, was that adequate for you folks' needs?

MK: I guess so. That time, when she was in Palama, she had three children above me and my sister. When she moved to Liliha Street, then she have other children. To me, I don't think she had a hard time because those days, everything is so cheap. The rent is so cheap.

VL: Did your father change jobs after he moved to Liliha Street?

MK: Yeah, he has a business. Hotel. (Where Mayor Wright housing is now.)

VL: Can you talk a little bit about their business?

MK: Well....

VL: Like how big was the hotel?

MK: How big? Those days, you don't have any big building. It's a building, had two sides. Us, we have different--we call "ken", yeah? Like you folks have, too, eh? Hakka, Punti, like that, yeah? Well, that's what we had. One [side] is Fukuoka, is us. And one is Kumamoto. So the hotel has two sides and in the center had barber shop and then the tailor. (There were eight rooms altogether, four for each ken; they were located on the second floor, above the barbershop and billiard parlor. The two sections were divided by a hallway.)

VL: Did your parents also run the barbershop and tailor shop?

MK: No, they rent themself. But the small store, had tailor. And before that had billiard parlor. [Originally] we had over there as a [hotel] room, so as the business went down, my father open over there for billiard parlor. So he had a office boy work for him, take care the office. For the tourist come in and out. And my mother used to cook and when busy, she hire somebody else to do the cooking

VL: For the hotel people?

MK: Yeah. They always come from Japan. And some come from country, stay overnight for business. People who raise watermelon and all those things, they come to our hotel.

VL: Did your older brothers and sisters work, at the time that you were living Liliha Street?

MK: Yeah, my big brother work American Can. Second brother, he was driving taxi. From that, he went to work for Standard Oil.

VL: Were they living at home, at the time?

MK: Yeah.

VL: The income that they got from their jobs, did they keep all of it themselves?

MK: No, no. Give to our parents.

VL: And this was when you were going to school?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Can you compare how much education you had with your brothers and sisters? Was it more or less?

MK: My brothers have little more than what we had. Because those days never had university. Only get high school.

VL: Did your brothers go up to 12th grade?

MK: Yeah. We all went Kaiulani [Elementary] School.

VL: But you went up to eighth grade.

MK: Yeah.

VL: Did you want to go to more schooling after eighth...

MK: Yeah, I wanted.

VL: But how come you didn't?

MK: Because the hotel was so busy, and we have small children; my mother wants us to stay home take care them.

VL: What was she doing?

MK: She was helping cooking. And cleaning up.

VL: How did you feel about not being able to go to more school?

MK: Oh, I feel bad. That's why, I give my boy [son] all education. That's the only thing I can do.

VL: Did you have an idea that you wanted to be something when you grew older?

MK: I wanted to be a dressmaker. So when cannery was slack, I used to go Emma Street, to this haole lady. She makes gown, you know. And I wanted to learn how to make dress, but she make me learn how to take off the hem and put the hem up and sew. And I was getting tired. So I quit that, I went back to work [at the cannery]. When we have work, I go to work. When there's no cannery--because we were seasonal, just like--so we find job, this and that. I went to Libby.

VL: Did your parents have any idea that they wanted you to be something, or have a certain job?

MK: No, I don't think so. Parents were busy with their work. You know, those days, hotel was busy. I just can remember. That's why, she don't want us to be in the way.

VL: Did they want you to take over the hotel business?

MK: No, they wants my brother to take over. My second brother. She figure he's more kind of business-like, because he was taxi driver. But he didn't like because....he speak Japanese, but you get Japanese people coming over, and we used to have wrestlers coming over stay with us. Since the bookkeeper, he's educated, you see--

he's from Japan--so he [brother] didn't care. He [brother] goes in the office and check the book but he wasn't interested [in taking over].

VL: What eventually happened to their hotel?

MK: That was Bishop property, you see. So over there, all the lease. And they want to fill in there and they want to make the housing. They have the Mayor Wright Housing now.

VL: What did your parents do after that?

MK: And then, they were living near Liliha Street, Hiram Lane. They stayed with my brother, my eldest brother.

VL: Going back a little, you started working at Hawaiian Pine when you were 13 [1914], and you were still going to school?

MK: Uh huh [yes].

VL: How come you started to work?

MK: We went just for the fun. (Laughs)

VL: Who's "we?"

MK: Me and my sister, and one lady living near to Hawaiian Pine. They used to have a patch there and she used to live in there. They all about our age. So we says, "Oh, let's go over there," because so many people going, eh.

VL: Summertime?

MK: Yeah, cannery. So many people going, so we follow them. (Laughs) And that's how we got.

VL: Had you heard things about the cannery from other people?

MK: No.

VL: How did you know that they would hire you?

MK: We just follow them. Because lots of school kids were going. Older people than us. So we just follow them, go and stand with them. Then this foreman stand up, we stay in a group, and he just pick us like that.

VL: How big was the group? How many people?

MK: Oh, about 50 or 60, I think. Students, and some were housewives. The children home so they want the job. All kind nationality.

VL: Was there mostly one kind nationality?

MK: No, all kinds.

VL: How did they decide who to pick?

MK: I don't know. He just stand in the center, on a stool, and we down. They raise hand, he just pick so and so.

VL: Were you picked on the first day that you went down there?

MK: Yeah.

VL: How did you feel about that?

MK: Oh, we got scared. (Laughs)

VL: Why did you decide to go to Hawaiian Pine?

MK: I see the people all marching down. They pass in front my house, you see. They all going so we follow them.

VL: Hawaiian Pine was closer?

MK: Yeah. But we had to pass the track. We used to have a train. So we had to pass the track all in there.

VL: Was it something that you decided to do on the spur of the moment, or had you thought about it a little bit before?

MK: No. I see them going so I just say, "Just follow them."

VL: You didn't even ask your mother?

MK: No, no. And she didn't know where we was. But when we came home we was all wet with pineapple juice. Then she found out where we went.

VL: What did she think?

MK: She laugh at us.

VL: Did she approve, though?

MK: No, she didn't. She said she want us to stay home, to take care our brothers. But we sneak, we get up early in the morning while she sleeping, we went to work. But hours are short. Half a day. Later on, then they let us work little bit longer hour.

VL: That first day that you went, how did you learn what to do?

MK: We called "receiver," that. You see, you had the picture with the tray and had a [slicing] machine on the side. The pineapple goes in a tub. The trimmers clean that and goes in the tub. They wash

that pineapple in a tub. The water is always clean. The tub half of this, I think. [See photo section]

VL: Half of this table, maybe two feet by three feet.

MK: Yeah. And the pineapple from the trimming side drop in there.

VL: The trimmed pineapple drops in the tub, and then?

MK: In the tub. And the man standing on the side [of the tub], he grab the pine and he put in the machine. And the machine is always going this way [slicing motion]. And have a little slide thing. And he puts in there, then the pineapple slide through the machine, hit that thing [slicer]. And then, I stand on the side, I receive that. To make it straight. When she come out, it's all sliced. So I have to receive that.

VL: You receive the sliced pine?

MK: Yeah. I put my finger inside [the center of the pineapple], I receive that. I receiving, the belt is there so [the sliced pine] goes to the next person. And she's the packer. She wants the pineapple to be stands up, not lying down. When the pineapple drop down, she say, "Watch out, watch out."

VL: So you would stick one finger in each end of the pine? And pull it down. Straighten it up.

MK: Yeah. That's why, when [I receive] the pineapple, the water splash me over here [stomach]. That's why I get wet every time.

VL: And that first day, you did that all day?

MK: Yeah. Nobody teach you, you know. But the lady on the side [of me] standing, they call her "first Y packer."

VL: What does that mean?

MK: That's the quality of the fruit. See, from one pineapple, you have fancy, choice and broken. So this girl who pack the Y's [same as fancy], she have little bit more pay than the below girls. [i.e., the girls toward the end of the table.] [MK later changed her mind about the pay differential.] They have about five girls all packing fancy.

VL: Did you learn all that in the first day that you were there?

MK: No, I was scared. I no even look around. But the lady next to me, this Hawaiian, her name is Annie Kealoha. She was very nice, and she taught me what to do. When lunch, I didn't know what to do. She take my gloves off. And I had to go with her go eat lunch.

VL: What about your friends and your sister; where were they?

MK: They were far away. They have very few tables. I think 8 or 10 tables, I think.

VL: And this was summer?

MK: Uh huh.

VL: So that should be peak?

MK: Yeah.

VL: When they chose you, did you have to fill out some kind of application, or....when they chose you from that big group?

MK: Yeah.

VL: What kind of information did they ask?

MK: My name, and where I live. Ask me if I have a telephone.

VL: How about your age?

MK: Yeah, my age. And I just can remember who that guy is. He used to go university. James Chun.

VL: What was his job?

MK: He was timekeeper.

VL: So you tell him all that information?

MK: Yeah. And then, they give you a number. And I still remember my number--230.

VL: What did you do with the number?

MK: We had to put on.

VL: Did you tell them your correct age?

MK: Yeah.

VL: And they didn't mind you were just 13?

MK: Yeah, because they were hiring people like that. Not below that. And they see the height. And then report to Labor Department, I think. To let them know they hire somebody underage. That's why we cannot work too long, too long hours. But they were sneaking us to make us long hours, because they need us. When later on, the following year I think, they found out that we are underage.

VL: When they make you work long hours did they pay you more, time and a half or something?

MK: Same as the other people.

VL: What were your wages, that first.....

MK: I think was 7 or 8 cents [an hour]. When we tell people, they don't believe. I think 7 cents, we had. Then when we start for packer, then we get 8 cents.

VL: So you did this receiving job for how long?

MK: For the summer. When I went back [the next summer], I stayed little while, then they made me pack.

VL: Do you think that all the receivers got the same pay that you did?

MK: Uh huh [yes].

VL: How about the Hawaiian lady next to you?

MK: Oh, she have 8 cents because she's a first Y packer.

VL: Just one penny difference?

MK: Yeah.

VL: But then the packers of the other grades were paid differently than she was?

MK: I think they were having 7 cents. The first four or five girls, they have little bit higher because they have to pick all the fancy. See, then they [the pine slices] drop down [flat, onto the belt]. Below the four or five girls, they only sort it up and then....

VL: You mean the next ones after the five?

MK: Yeah. They drop the pine, so she had to sort out all for the choice. The first one have all the pineapple all standing. So what she [the fancy packer] drop down, she [the choice packer] pick 'em up. And the other three girls, I think, pick up all the odds and ends.

VL: Three, they're on the end?

MK: Uh huh. Yeah, we call 'em "broken pieces." All the pieces broken, they put in the gallon or something like that. A shame Hawaiian Pine don't have this, yeah?

VL: This information? You mean....

MK: When Dole was working and how the cannery was going.

VL: They have some, like when they started to make tidbits, or some-

thing. But your viewpoint, they don't have. Of some young girl who worked there, they don't have that.

You said lunch time you didn't know what to do, so you had to go with her. What kind of lunch, when was your lunch break?

MK: Twelve o'clock. The whistle blow. Then we all go.

VL: Go where?

MK: To the cafeteria. The cafeteria was small. Then we go to our locker room.

VL: What would you go to the locker room for?

MK: They put the lunch in there. The locker had all numbers so you had to remember the number. So if the locker is all painted same, so we used to put handkerchief or ribbon on the hook, so we can remember.

VL: And what would you put in the locker?

MK: Our lunch. Ball rice or whatever we have from home. Or bread.

VL: Did you ever eat at the cafeteria?

MK: You have no time. Because so crowded. The cafeteria small, eh. Only once in a great while we goes. When a few tables running. Then you have to go in there serve---just like, what you call, small place. You go get your coffee. Whatever you want, you want stew or whatever. Stand in line. Just like university.

VL: But most times you brought lunch from home?

MK: Uh huh. Because time is only half an hour.

VL: So where would you eat it?

MK: In the locker room. The locker room is now the timekeeper's office.

VL: It's not the same locker room that they have now?

MK: No. Timekeeper's office up there.

VL: When you first went to work that first summer, did they tell you they're certain, certain rules that you had to follow when you were working at the cannery? Either, say, about clothing? What were the rules about clothing?

MK: No, no. I don't think we had. Because we used to wear---oh, later on, we had. We have to wear shoes. Because we used to wear wooden geta.

VL: How about your dress?

MK: No, no trouble.

VL: And your hair?

MK: No. That's why, we used to have long hair. Braid. Following year, I think, they tell us they have a girl to sew cap and aprons. We call that "apron room."

VL: The first year you went they didn't have that?

MK: No.

VL: And the next year they did?

MK: Yeah.

VL: So that first year, you didn't wear caps?

MK: No, wait. First year we had cap. So I had to braid my hair and put all like this. Put all pins, otherwise the cap won't in. That kind pulling cap. With the string all here, and you pull it.

VL: In the back.

MK: Uh huh [yes].

VL: How about hair net under that?

MK: No.

VL: And the first year did you wear an apron?

MK: No. No aprons. I think we used to buy the gloves. They deduct from your pay.

VL: Do you remember how much they were?

MK: I forgot. Later on, they were charging dollar-something, you know. They deduct from the pay; I don't know how much was.

VL: So that first day that you worked, they gave you gloves and deduct it from your pay?

MK: Yeah.

VL: How often would you have to get new gloves?

MK: Well, when you have a hole leaking. You can feel it; it's when it's wet. You have to change, otherwise you have all that pineapple sores. From the juice.

- VL: Did your first pair of gloves last you the whole summer?
- MK: No. But after you buy, the girls come around. Glove, touch here. To change your gloves or what, they touch your back. So when your gloves is leak, the lady say change, then they don't charge that. When you get hired, that's the day they charge you. After that, they don't.
- VL: Going back to the rules, that first few summers that you worked; were there any rules about talking or running?
- MK: Oh, running, yeah.
- VL: Cannot?
- MK: Yeah.
- VL: Or how you were supposed to act to your forelady, did they tell you anything about that?
- MK: No. We were young kids, we scared. We don't answer back. Even the foremans come around talk to you, you scared.
- VL: What would they talk to you about?
- MK: Well, they tell, "Get this," and "Do this." And you do it. You don't answer back. You scared. You small kid. (Laughs)
- VL: What were you scared of?
- MK: I guess we scared because mostly men foremen. The head foreladies all ladies. The Hawaiian lady Annie [head forelady] was very nice. After that, we had another Hawaiian lady [as head forelady], Emma. That one, everybody was scared.
- VL: That first six years, I think you were a seasonal....until 1920, you were seasonal? So only in the summer?
- MK: Yeah. (Pause) Wait, not 1920. 1918, I think, [I became] forelady. Intermittent forelady. Those days, they didn't have any such thing as a [woman] regular. Only men. Even my head forelady, she wasn't regular. When there's no work she stay home, too.
- VL: That four years or so, that you were seasonal, you did some packing also?
- MK: Uh huh.
- VL: How did you switch from receiver to packer?
- MK: That forelady, I guess to me, she looks around, she think, "Try that person." And she put somebody else over there [as receiver]. And then, you stand by, you just go between the person [on the

packing line]. If there's five girls, you go in between. And you just watch. Between but you had to go down [to the end of the fancy packers]. Pick up the odds and ends. Maybe these four girls picking up the fancy; and the fifth girl, she don't have the whole slice, whole cylinder. Maybe about three girls, they have the whole cylinder because one girl cannot grab all. So what they drop past, the fifth girl pick up and they look if there's no eyes or see if slices good. And they put in the fancy can, same as with them.

VL: And so where would you be?

MK: I'm in the end or fourth. I'm going to learn. If I understand what the fancy, the quality of the fancy. And then, they gradually move up, up. Then your pay going to be little bit more. But you have to grow some. And those days, the pineapple is big, you know; 2-1/2.

VL: What would happen with your money that you got on pay day?

MK: I give it to my parents.

VL: Everything. Did they give you back any?

MK: No. Maybe they give me 25 cents. Sometimes they give, sometimes they don't. We don't need because we got to take our lunch. When we buy sandwich, then we get the money. Cafeteria.

VL: How about after you graduated eighth grade; then you were still working just summertimes, yeah. What would you do the rest of the year?

MK: As I say, I go sewing. And then, Libby was busy.

VL: How did you know they were busy?

MK: Because that lady that living close to Dole office, you have to cross the track and then they was living in the patch.

VL: Your friend?

MK: Yeah. And she had aunty or something that working Libby. And they want some girls. So she called me, "If you want to go?"

So I says, "Okay." So tomorrow morning come her house. So we walk on a track and we went. And from the track, we went down Libby back by the train. We didn't go from the main road, we went the back. So they hire us. They didn't want any packers; they want the girls for clean cans. You know the can, get rust. You get the steel wool and clean.

That time, we were forelady already. So [Hawaiian Pine] cannery never had [work]. Was closed down for so many weeks, I think. So

we work over there [Libby's]. That Japanese foreman wants us to stay there, they give us steady job.

VL: At Libby?

MK: Yeah. Then Dole get pineapple, so they calling the people back. But we pass the track, Dole company over here. We pass over there and we go home [after work at Libby's]. So every day we pass over there, and there's a Korean man, he has only these two finger [thumb and little finger]. Korean man. We call him "Sun." Well, he saw us passing over there every morning, going work. So that day the pineapple running so they want us to come. He told us. We sit down on the platform on the pineapple boxes. He say, "Eh, I think tomorrow get work, you know." But we didn't pay attention because this side we work eight hours.

VL: At Libby?

MK: Yeah. So we pass over there. And then, he told us "Eh, you folks better come back work."

I says, "No, Libby get work."

So next morning, early in the morning, he call the head forelady Annie to come over there on the platform where we going pass. And she was over there and she call us, "Come back because get plenty work." So we went back. From then on, we work right through.

VL: How come you went back?

MK: Because to me, if Dole get, I rather work Dole because I have to pass the track. And the train coming every time. Danger, you know, over there. So we went Hawaiian Pine. And she tried to find job for us.

VL: Steady?

MK: Yeah. So we do the same thing. When cannery pau, finish early, she take us go to scrub can. Same thing was doing Libby.

VL: So you would get eight hours a day?

MK: Yeah.

VL: This was when you were about how old?

MK: When I was forelady. That's 1918.

VL: Past 1918?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Can you describe a typical day, before you became forelady? I

guess while you were still seasonal. From the time that you would wake up in the morning, all through the day till nighttime. Were you always on day shift?

MK: Uh huh [yes].

VL: So what time would you have to wake up to go to work?

MK: When I was seasonal? Oh, we start 7 o'clock, so I get up about 6 o'clock.

VL: And then what would you do?

MK: Walk down.

VL: But you make your lunch?

MK: Uh huh.

VL: Did you eat breakfast, too?

MK: Yeah.

VL: And then walk down?

MK: Walk down, walk home.

VL: Did you have chores after you came home? Work that you had to do at home?

MK: I have to wash my clothes. Because all dirty, yeah. That's the first thing we do, wash our clothes. Because my brother says, "Oh, that stink, stink." Pineapple, eh. They say, "Oh, the whiff, whiff." They don't want to come near us. So they grab our clothes, throw outside. So we got to wash that, first thing. And in the nighttime, we have to iron the clothes. We have to do all ourself because my mother was so busy.

VL: Did you ever have time to have fun?

MK: Oh yeah. Play marble.

VL: When was that? At night, or....

MK: Daytime. When there's no work. Sometime we get through early, eh. Two o'clock. Those days, the hours is not set. Sometime you work four hours, sometimes you work two hours, six hours. Only season time you have longer hour. Seven o'clock [p.m.], like that. But after that, the hours are very short.

VL: How did you know there was work at all that day? How did you know the cannery was operating?

MK: They have on the blackboard.

VL: You mean it tells you that the next day there will or won't be....

MK: Yeah. The hours, we ask everybody. "Eh, what time pau, what time pau?"

And they mostly know from platform--you know the Korean man with the finger? Well, he knows. Because he knows the tonnage over there. And he says, "Oh, maybe 2:00 or 1:30." He says from the platform, tell the downstairs girls.

VL: Would you rather have worked all year round?

MK: Oh yes.

VL: How come?

MK: So you get something to do. You know those days, we get \$8 a week, paycheck. We used to be so happy. (Laughs) We used to be so happy.

VL: What other kinds of little jobs did you try when it was off season? You said you tried to work for the dressmaker for a while. Did you try other jobs, too?

MK: Yeah, cannery offer us. For instance, cannery work two hours. Then they assign us to different---maybe warehouse. Warehouse busy so we assigned the warehouse. And maybe cannery doesn't work for couple days; and then they assign us warehouse, and we work couple days warehouse.

VL: Were there any periods of time when you didn't work at all?

MK: At the beginning time. But when I became forelady, we have a job all the time. When we went Libby, we came back from that.

VL: So when you became forelady, how did you get to be forelady?

MK: I guess the way how you work. Because I was pretty fast worker, you know. First Y packer.

VL: You worked your way up to the first Y packer?

MK: Uh huh [yes]. Then, they pick you forelady.

VL: They pick you or do you apply?

MK: No, they pick you. Those days, you no go apply. The head forelady go around and look, and then she assign you.

VL: Were you trained to be forelady? How did you know what to do?

MK: Yeah, she take me around. When you become forelady, you have about four tables. When you don't have forelady, she take you all around.

And she tell me, "Go through the whole house." Or come see, follow her, what she do. Watch. So you know all that job what they doing. You know the different size of fruit.

VL: What else did she tell you was important to do as a forelady?

MK: But mostly she do herself, and I have to watch what she do. And whenever we go where she go, we go with her. And she pick. They want warehouse so many girls, and she pick so many girls go. But I'm always with her.

VL: During the training?

MK: Yeah.

VL: You seemed like you were quite young when they made you forelady [age 17].

MK: Yeah.

VL: Was that unusual, for someone that young?

MK: Yes. That's why, they don't call me "forelady," that others foreladies because had all elder foreladies, eh. They all married and I was the youngest in there. Even the foremans used to come tease me.

VL: How did they tease you?

MK: They tell, "Eh, girl. Eh, girl."

And then the head forelady says, "She's not a girl. She's forelady."

VL: How did the regular workers treat you? They must have been older than you, too.

MK: Oh yeah. They was all right. They friendly. I was thinking, "It's a nice place to work." But I didn't work other place, that's why I don't know. I went to warehouse, they all right.

VL: Back in the early part, when you were seasonal and also when you had just become a forelady; what kind of facilities did the cannery have for....say, shower and toilet? Can you describe what they had?

MK: They have a locker room with all the toilets. They had all, the whole thing. And they have a door, and you go there. Women's, we had one small place shower. And had all the basin; the toilets over there, right opposite the basins. All individual.

VL: Individual toilets?

MK: Yeah.

VL: With doors?

MK: Yeah.

VL: And where was this located?

MK: Right now is timekeeper's office, they have now.

VL: Did many people take showers there?

MK: Very few. I don't think they take shower, because the time is so limited. I don't think we had a rest period, you know, break. Right now, you have break 10 minutes. We didn't have break. If you want to use the toilet, you just tell the forelady that you want to go upstairs. And she let you go. And she take your place until you come back.

VL: What would happen, say, when you had your period?

MK: Yeah, they let you go. You tell the forelady, they let you go. And you [the forelady] go take her place.

VL: Did you have certain amount of time you could take, or you just take as long as you want?

MK: Oh no, you can't. Like me, if you go out, I'm the forelady, I take your place. I can just see how long you going stay. If you going stay longer, ask the person, "What happened?" You know, we don't scold them. We just tell 'em, "What happened?"

They say, "Oh, was this and that, this and that."

"So next time, make it little bit shorter." Because next person going feel bad.

VL: Could you talk to the people next to you?

MK: Oh yeah.

VL: How about the noise?

MK: The noise is....you got to talk loud.

VL: Packing is the same thing all the time; did it ever get dull doing the same thing?

MK: When we four girls, we tired, we change among ourselves.

VL: So instead of being the first one you would be the fourth or fifth?

MK: Yeah.

VL: How would that---it seems you still almost doing the same thing?

MK: Yeah, but you doing less because the first one is trying to take all what she can. Maybe when she see three, maybe one she going let 'em come down and you pick. Maybe the odd ends you picking. If you have a good [first] packer, you have easy life.

VL: Was there anything else you could do to make it more interesting?

MK: Well, they have 2-tall, small pine. When the pineapple is smaller. They have 2-1/2 is the big pine. And 2-tall is smaller pine. It's small, that's why something different you do. It's the same way of packing but light. Two and a half is heavy. Two-tall is light. But you have more fancy in the 2-tall.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

VL: How would you change to another table to do the 2-tall?

MK: If the platform has lot of 2-talls in the bin, then that table have to move to 2-tall. The whole table have to move. But sometimes, the 2-tall tables short of girls. Then the 2-1/2 get too many girls, they take you to 2-tall. But mostly, they change. Or they change the slicer to make it 2-tall. Two-tall slicer. And the cans, 2-tall cans.

VL: Same table you're at then; they just change the slicer and the cans?

MK: Yeah. And they know the platform have too many 2-tall fruit outside there. And that 2-1/2 is way down. So instead of move the whole table, only what they do is change the slicer--you know, the receiver--that, and the cans. So while they doing that maybe you get few minutes rest.

VL: Were there any other things you could do to make it more interesting?

MK: Well....the tidbits came afterwards. But if you want to go down to the end of the table pack something different [a different grade], they have.

VL: How? Would you just ask the forelady?

MK: Yeah. Usually, she doesn't. Because that place is a very slow job.

VL: Plus, it's paid different wasn't it?

MK: No, they are paid the same.

- VL: Were there some times when you were just so tired or so bored that...
- MK: No more such thing as bored. The pineapple is just coming, coming, coming. Unless Ginaca broken, or something. Then you have a break, sit down. The whole table, three minutes everybody sitting down. But otherwise, no, the pineapple just come down. Just like water. Just coming down.
- VL: How about sleepy? Would you be sleepy?
- MK: Oh no. No more chance for those things.
- VL: Were you standing or sitting?
- MK: Standing. And there were chair right back of you. You can sit down. But to reach over is hard. So you rather stand. When the machine stop or there's no pineapple, then you can sit.
- VL: You mean to reach over to put it in the cans?
- MK: Yeah.
- VL: Those days, how many cans per tray?
- MK: Two and a half is 24.
- VL: How long would it take you to fill one tray?
- MK: Depend on the fruit. If you have good quality, you have more fancy on the fruit, then you can fill it faster. Keep the boy really busy. Yeah, keep the boy busy.
- VL: Each table had how many boys?
- MK: At times, three. At times, two.
- VL: Can you describe what their job was?
- MK: They rotate. One boy carry the fancy trays, because he had to carry the whole tray, you know.
- VL: Twenty-four cans.
- MK: Yeah. And always 24. And that second boy is taking the choice. And you have to put on separate stack. Then, at the end is the [cans of] broken [pieces]. They all separate stack. When they slow, they take one boy out.
- VL: So when you had filled the 24 cans he would lift the whole tray off?
- MK: Yeah.

VL: Where would he put it?

MK: Right back of the table. He have a aisle himself. So he stack right there. He have a tray underneath, and he put on top the tray. And the tray have to face different way so the trucker, when they come in, they can put their hook in there--the fork in there.

VL: So the trucker and the tray boy is different?

MK: Yeah. Because the trucker have to put the pineapple to the double seamer. And the double seamer have a boy, from the tray, he just throw it like that. There's a....what you call....he throw in there and the thing all going to double seamer. And they bin can up. The juice get in and then cover.

VL: How about the speed that the pineapples came down? So, in other words, the number of pineapples you had to pack.

MK: I know what you mean, yeah....wait now, the pineapple was one minute, so many pine come down. Those things, the Ginaca have the meter. When they take the core out, right over there they have. So they, it goes to the office [i.e., it is controlled by the office]. Those days---but later on, we put [controlled] the meter. And we have a tally card.

VL: Later on, about when?

MK: Nineteen forty-six. Nineteen thirty, the cannery change already.

VL: What kind of changes?

MK: See, we talking about early now. Now, you going to what?

VL: I'll stick with the early then. So the early days...

MK: We didn't have any meter.

VL: So what if you felt it was too fast? Would you ever feel that way?

MK: No. Only when we felt fast, only when the pineapple is big. When the pineapple is small, the small ones go to 2-tall. To us, 2-tall is faster, because the 2-1/2 is long and 2-tall is small but maybe two of that [i.e., you have to pack twice as many 2-talls]. So we going have more.

VL: Could you do anything about it if you felt it was too fast?

MK: That's why, 2-tall have more---no, 2-1/2 had more girls [per table]. And 2-tall had less girls. Because when the pineapple is nice and clean you don't need too many girls. Because the first Y packers, from one pineapple, maybe she might get more than half fancy. So that all would go to the first Y packer, she put in. So that maybe two, three pieces is for the other rest of the girls. So they

going to have easy life. Is all depend on what size, quality of the fruit.

Those days, we work hard. The pineapple was nice. Ho. Pineapple was really nice. And they were sweet.

VL: While you were packing could you eat some?

MK: Oh yeah. But you not supposed to throw it on the belt after you eat. Some people, they do that. In those days, even we had a contract.

VL: What kind?

MK: Packing 2-1/2. We used to have flag. And who pack more get 1 cent more every hour.

VL: The individual person or the whole table?

MK: The whole table, I mean. Yeah.

VL: Can you describe how they timed that, how they did that?

MK: That, they had order from Mainland, is the 2-1/2, the thin slice. See, the regular slice [equals] two of that [thin slice]. So when we pack that we had to put 12 in a can. The 2-1/2 original one is eight, but this is 12. So from one pineapple, to contract with the other four tables, we had to go some [go fast]. But we had lot of fun.

VL: The four tables are competing against each other, to see who can pack the most?

MK: Yeah. So we all had flag on the table. That's the table have a contract. But thin slice.

VL: They only did that for the thin slice?

MK: Yeah, only for the thin slice. Until whatever they want finish.

VL: And whoever did the most, that table all gets one penny more?

MK: Yeah.

VL: How come they didn't do that for all the time?

MK: Well, that thin slice.

VL: Yeah, but they could have done it for the regular slice too, yeah?

MK: Too much, eh. The pay was getting harder. Was getting more, because when we was forelady we had only 10 cents. Only 2 cents more than the first Y packer.

VL: So you mean if they had done it all the time...

MK: I don't think---it's all depend on whoever take orders from Mainland. I think this was for the Army or something, was. So they want that for certain days, so we had to finish that. That's why, they had to make contract.

VL: And you said it was fun?

MK: Oh yes, we had a good fun.

VL: Why was it fun?

MK: Because we want to race with the other table. See, we face each other like that, the four tables. Oh, was good.

VL: Did you always work with the same ladies at the same table?

MK: Yeah.

VL: So in those days you were assigned a certain table?

MK: Yeah. Only few tables; about eight. Most was 12, I think. And all young kids too, eh.

VL: You talking about summer?

MK: Yeah. The contract we had. And some from University.

VL: Did the company have any other ways of getting you to go faster or more?

MK: Oh yeah, they can speed the machine. Speed the machine. Or they can speed the belt.

VL: Did you always know when that was happening?

MK: They don't have. They didn't do those things.

VL: Was always the same?

MK: Yeah, always same.

VL: How about other benefits for the workers; like library room or something like that?

MK: Oh, that was later on we had.

VL: In the beginning, did they have anything like that for the workers?

MK: No.

VL: Or sports, in the beginning?

MK: No. When we was forelady, that's the time, have library and sports. But after work. Not during the working hour.

VL: After you became forelady?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Some of the women--this is still early time--they were mothers. And you mentioned that they had a child care or a nursery. Where was that located?

MK: Yeah. That was located--right now is by timekeeper's parking space. Did you go to the Dole? You see the parking space by the bridge [ramp] down?

VL: Yeah.

MK: Right there.

VL: Did you know any women who had their children in that nursery?

MK: I know only the one who was taking care. I don't know if she's living or what.

VL: I was just wondering if you heard anything about the quality of it; whether it was good or not, the nursery. Whether the mothers liked...

MK: I guess so, because had plenty, you know. And this girl, she's a Japanese girl married haole. She was good, she liked the job. From dispensary they ask her.

VL: Just one?

MK: Yeah, one girl. And she didn't have children herself, but she was really good. Small girl but she was really good. And the nurse goes over there once in a while. And she check with her.

VL: So quite a few things changed when you became forelady?

MK: Oh yes. In fact, the whole building changed. When I went there, used to be Hawaiian Pineapple. The office is now no more. I think I had one picture. I had lot of pictures; I threw it away, you know.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: That's why, we used to see Dole every time. Mr. Dole.

VL: Oh, he used to come around? And what would he do?

MK: Walk around the cannery, talk to---you know, say "Hello" to the workers. He go cafeteria.

VL: Also, for you just personally, things changed when you become forelady, right?

MK: Oh yeah.

VL: Longer hours?

MK: Uh huh [yes].

VL: What other kind of changes?

MK: Had more responsibility.

VL: More pay?

MK: Yeah. As a forelady, you have a certain table to take care. That's all.

VL: One table?

MK: Two tables. Our days was (usually) four tables. You get more to go. Now days people, they get four; we used to get two, four, or six, whatever they give us.

VL: What was the most important part of your job, when you had those four or six tables?

MK: Had to see our workers know the job and put in the right kind of fruit in the can. Because those days, our company was the quality on fancy. They want quality. So you had to check the cans all the time, to see they putting proper fruit in there, quality in there.

VL: And what if they weren't?

MK: Then you had to check on her and teach her. You know, what's wrong with the slice. Maybe you have a little cut on the side--the trimming cut--well, that is going to be choice. Fancy have to be perfect slice, and with color. Those days was really strict.

VL: Did they have inspection, too?

MK: We used to have---they come around and take so many stack or trays--maybe four trays from this table, maybe next table so many, four tables. And they used to have in the middle of the cannery, we used to have a table. And we used to have four or five girls there with one forelady. She check all the cans, and she mark on the tray from what table. Table 5 or what. What the errors they found. And they call you. And that thing is all marked down.

VL: Did that ever happen to you?

MK: Once in a while.

VL: It's marked down on your record?

MK: No, they have all marked down on their....because that department is different department. They call that "Fruit Quality." They're the people they want quality.

VL: But somehow it reflects on you, yeah; because you're the forelady. So would that get on to your record?

MK: Yeah, that's right. They got a table number. They don't have a name but they got table number. And they come around and see. They cannot pinpoint, "Oh, you the one making all the mistake," or, "You the one." You have to examine the can and that girl is packing. And you just correct her.

VL: So that was the most important thing about your job?

MK: Yeah. So we had to constantly inspect cans.

VL: How about other problems that the girls had; did they come to you with personal problems? Was that part of your job?

MK: As a forelady, oh yeah.

VL: What kind of problems would they...

MK: Well, they say they feet sore. Or they have a headache, and we send 'em dispensary. Or maybe the gloves--you know, they move like this and the juice get here and get rash. So we send dispensary. And then when the glove get hole and they don't notice and then all the blood in here [fingers]. From the pineapple juice. So we tell her go in the glove room and go change the glove. Or on the way, if we see the glove we change the glove.

VL: And who takes her place when she's gone?

MK: The forelady.

VL: You would?

MK: Those days, yeah.

VL: You said you got married in 1924; and your husband worked at the cannery?

MK: Uh huh [yes].

VL: What was his job there, your husband's job? When you met him.

MK: Foreman.

VL: How did you meet him?

MK: From the sister. The sister used to work, too; the big sister.

VL: His sister?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Did you get to see much of each other during the work day?

MK: No, no more time for those things. So busy, eh. And he was busy himself.

VL: He was a foreman elsewhere?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Did the cannery have any feelings about employees getting married, or did they have any policy on....

MK: No. I don't think they have those things. Even the bosses married the secretary, or married trimming girls, like that.

VL: It happened quite a bit?

MK: Uh huh.

VL: After you folks were married....up until that time you were living with your parents?

MK: Uh huh.

VL: And after that, how was your money situation; did you still give money to your parents after you were married?

MK: No. Then I give [his] parents. I give to him.

VL: So how often were you paid?

MK: Every week.

VL: And so you would give the money to your husband, and he handled it?

MK: Yeah.

VL: What kind of expenses did you folks have, you and your husband?

MK: Lunch.

VL: I mean like rent, and....

MK: Yeah, we help the mother. Rent.

VL: You were living with his mother?

MK: Uh huh [yes]. For one year.

VL: Did you folks make enough money for your needs?

MK: Yeah, we had enough.

VL: Was he supporting his parents?

MK: No. He have above brothers and sisters; they all was married. And she's a widow, yeah. So we stayed with her one year. So we got a place.

VL: Then after a year you got a place of your own?

MK: No, it's a renting place.

VL: Were you folks able to save money?

MK: I guess so.

VL: Was there a bank or...

MK: We had a credit union.

VL: Was that part of the cannery?

MK: Yeah.

VL: How did that work?

MK: Wait now, those days never have credit union. We used to put our money in American Savings. Yeah, those days never had credit union. Later on, they had credit union. And they take from your pay, so much.

VL: Besides paying rent and food, did you have any other expenses?

MK: No. Well, later on we had a car. That was way ahead, 1950-something.

VL: You didn't have a car before then?

MK: No.

VL: After you got married did you want to have a child right away?

MK: I didn't think of those things. The work was so busy.

VL: Did you have some kind of birth control?

MK: No.

VL: So you might have had [a child]?

MK: Yeah, that's right. That's why, my mother was worried because I don't have children.

VL: For about four years, yeah.

MK: Yeah.

VL: Your son was born in 1928?

MK: Nineteen twenty-nine.

VL: So when he was born, then, you took time off?

MK: Uh huh. Maternity leave.

VL: How long was that?

MK: Three months. Wait now, more than that....because they didn't have those such things as maternity leave or things. So I think was six months, I think. Then my mother took over.

VL: Did you tell the cannery officials that you were going to have a baby?

MK: Yeah, have baby.

VL: And what did they say?

MK: Those days, they didn't have anything as....like you have to quit or this and that. So when I went back--was six months, I think--I went back, my name was on the list yet. So that shows that I didn't quit. So they just continue. You see, some people, they just like quit like. Mine wasn't like that. They wanted me to come back.

VL: And did you want to go back?

MK: Well, I'm not used to taking care of babies. So my mother said she going take care. And she says, "Okay." The hours was short anyway. Only summertime long hours. But after that, the hours are short.

VL: So summertime, what would happen then? Your mother took care of the son all day?

MK: Uh huh [yes]. We were living nearby, and she didn't have nobody to take care. So my sister-in-law was staying there; she took care, too. Interesting, yeah? (Laughs)

VL: Yeah.

MK: Yeah, those old days.

VL: So you didn't lose any seniority for having been gone that long?

MK: No, my seniority was on. I didn't have no problem. Because I went to talk to Kanky Chun. He told me, "No worry, the seniority is not broken."

VL: What was his job? Chun.

MK: Our timekeeper. Kanky Chun; you don't know him?

VL: I heard of him.

But that six months when you weren't working, you folks had no pay, yeah.

MK: Pay no more.

VL: How did you manage?

MK: My husband was working.

VL: Was enough?

MK: Uh huh.

VL: If there had been still that day care center, would you have put your son there?

MK: They never had. Was too much problem, that. They didn't have.

VL: If they did have....

MK: I don't know. I rather my parents take care. Because all different kind nationality in there. All Palama gang was there.
(Laughs)

VL: That was about the time of the Depression, too. Did that affect you folks?

MK: Money-wise, no, though. Didn't affect us, because we had a saving.

VL: So your husband kept his job; was steady?

MK: Yeah.

VL: What was his job at that time?

MK: From there he went to main office timekeeper. You know who is Aiona? Well, he was working under him. He needed one timekeeper, you see.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 6-19-2-79
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
Mabel Kozuki (MK)
March 14, 1979
Kaimuki, Oahu
BY: Vivien Lee (VL)

VL: This is an interview with Mabel Kozuki. Today is March 14, 1979. We're at her home in Kaimuki.

So the first question I wanted to ask you was back when you first started working, if you could you describe what the inside of the cannery looked like? Maybe you could start with describing the packing tables, because that's where you were working. Like how long they were and so on.

MK: How long they are? (Laughs) Well, they can hold about 10 girls. At one table. The 2-tall tables and 2-1/2 tables all same [length], but the amount of the girls are different. Small fruit [2-tall], we had about seven girls.

VL: Fewer girls for the small fruit?

MK: Yeah, fewer girls.

VL: Why is that?

MK: Because the pineapple is small. They don't come too fast as big ones. The machine--the slicer is small, too. And 2-1/2 is big, you see. When they have a small one they put double inside the slicer.

VL: This is 10 girls on each side of the table?

MK: No. They have so many sections. Two and a half, maybe they have 10 tables. And so many tables are 2-tall.

VL: But on one table, are there girls on both sides of the table, facing each other?

MK: No. You have a aisle. You see the picture you had of those men working? [See photo section] Well, that is one side. And we are back to back. See, they have 2-1/2 all one side [of the cannery], and 2-tall one side, because of Ginaca. Because the pineapple have

to come---they have a truck, you see. And the 2-1/2 pine comes by boxes. So they have to put all those boxes on one side, 2-1/2. And 2-tall on one side. They cannot put 2-tall over here and one table over here and one table 2-1/2. It's going to be hard for the truckers.

VL: Is there something separating the tables that packs the 2-1/2 and the 2-tall?

MK: Well, they have a wide table, wider than this for 1-tall (about two feet wide). Anyway, those days, they used to make 1-talls into juice.

VL: One-tall?

MK: One-tall is the smallest. They have a belt. And the pineapple come down and the trimmers trim all that, and they throw the pineapple on the belt. And they go to juice. One-tall. (In the 1950's they started to make 1-talls into tidbits instead of juice, because they were so sweet. Even later, they switched to making chunks out of 1-talls.)

VL: Can you draw a picture of the inside of the cannery? Like where the Ginacas are.

MK: This is the platform. [See diagram]

VL: That's on the outside?

MK: Yeah, outside. Platform. It's a platform, not small like this. This is the railroad track. The pineapple comes all in the boxes. They have so many high--I think about eight high.

VL: Eight boxes on top of each other?

MK: Yeah. I'm talking about 2-1/2. So this fellas here, with a truck, they go get the pineapple. Just like that. There's a truck and the railroad, and this the platform. So they just going to go on top there. If they cannot go, they used to have piece of iron over here, so they can go right through in the railroad track to get the box.

What you call that kind? Something stevedore have.

VL: Forklift?

MK: Yeah. It's a short one. It's a [hand] truck, but the truck is like this, and then the wheel. And they have a short over here to scoop the underneath. And then they go in there, they pick 'em up and here's all the tables. Ginaca, yeah.

VL: Is this platform indoors or outdoors?

MK: It's outside of the cannery but you have a roof.

VL: So the truckers go over there to pick up the boxes?

MK: Yeah, because here's the train. The boxes are all in the train, individual. One train carry this, and one more train over here.

VL: Each trucker, how many boxes does he carry?

MK: Amount on the height of the train.

VL: Up to eight boxes, then?

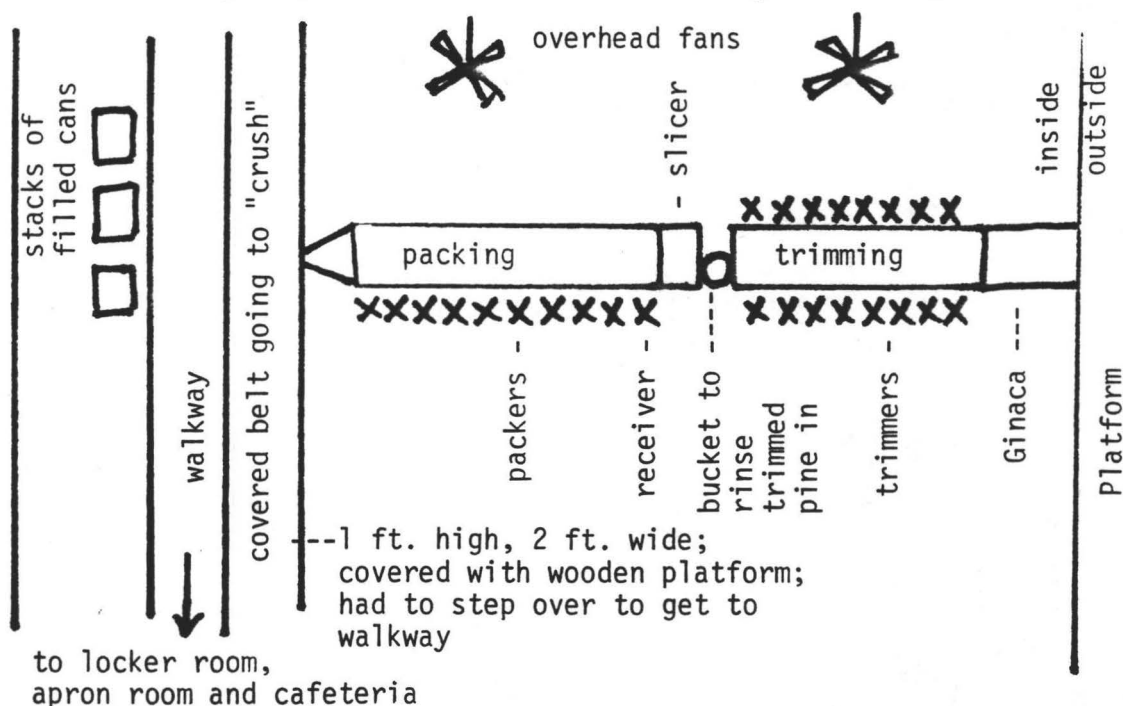
MK: Uh huh [yes]. They have to scoop all that and bring that over here, because here's the Ginaca machine over here, all. So they bring to over here, and they have boys dump in the belt. And from there, they go to the machine.

VL: And after it comes out of the Ginaca?

MK: In the cannery, now. This is the cannery. And here's the Ginaca. They take the core out and this is the trimmer, trimming table [next to the Ginaca]. And this is the packing table [next to the slicer]. And sometimes they can rig the Ginaca go this way and that way.

VL: Right and left side?

MK: Yeah. So one table get, and one other table have. And all the girls over here, sitting down [at the trimming table]. And the pineapple is here. After they trim, come to this bucket, like. There's a man [next to the bucket], one, here, and this is the slicer. [See photo section as well as diagram below.]



VL: Machine?

MK: Yeah, machine. And one girl stay here [next to the slicer].

VL: And this job was the one that you had the first summer, the receiver? From the slicer?

MK: Yeah. This is the table. She comes all in here. And this 10 girls going all pack the pineapple. All like that.

VL: So if the 2-1/2 size is coming through here, where are the 2-talls going?

MK: Two-tall is way on this side.

VL: Oh, would be on a separate part of the cannery.

MK: Yeah. So when they have less 2-1/2 and they have more 2-tall, then they can adjust this slicer to 2-tall slicer. So even the table on this side, they can change the slicer to 2-tall. Then they cut down the girls.

VL: And in those days, this packing table was made out of wood?

MK: Yeah.

VL: How wide was the belt?

MK: When we had, when I was working, the belt was....nine inches? Nine inches, yeah, I think.

VL: How about the chairs? What sort of chairs?

MK: They had this kind long chairs. [See photo section.]

VL: Each girl had her own?

MK: Two girls can sit down. Because they have a little underneath, so two girls can sit.

VL: How about the floors?

MK: Cement.

VL: Was there water on the floor?

MK: Oh yes. Because this belt [in front of the packers that the sliced pine is on] is going underneath [the table]--going just go like that [revolving]. See, this going underneath, under our feet.

VL: Under your feet?

MK: Uh huh. You standing and going just cross our feet.

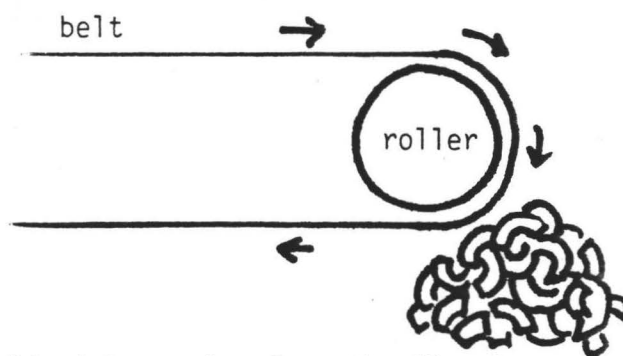
VL: Was there any danger of your foot getting stuck in the belt?

MK: Well, you stand on that little board (about two to three inches high and the length of the table). The board is like that [next to the table], and the belt is right here [under the table, near the board]. Sometimes. It depend how you sit down and stretch your feet. (Board is sometimes in two sections instead of one long piece. It is attached to the table and can be put up when table not in use.)

VL: So that means all this juice [from the table] is going on the floor?

MK: Yeah, that's right. And small pieces of the pineapple, as she go down the belt, sometimes she stuck over here [i.e., drops from belt onto floor in a pile]. So they have a man to clean that. They always have a janitor.

not an exact model



VL: And he would pick up pine from the floor?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Did anyone, in those early days, ever slip on the juice or the water?

MK: Sometimes you have the juice fall [from the belt] on your feet, yeah.

VL: And what would happen?

MK: That's why they go wash, or they get sometimes sores so they have to go dispensary. So later on, we have to wear covered shoes.

VL: Where could you wash your foot if you got juice on it?

MK: They have water down here. Over here. This is the bucket over here.

VL: Where the Ginaca machine is?

MK: No, this is the place I used to stand [as a receiver], over here. They have. And they have a little sink-like over here (next to

the slicer, between the packing and trimming tables).

VL: That's by where the tub is, where the pineapple goes in after it's been trimmed?

MK: Yeah. So you can wash your gloves.

VL: When could you do those things like wash your gloves?

MK: That's after work.

VL: How about the ceilings? What kind of lights?

MK: Oh, we had a fan. You know the old-fashioned fan.

VL: That turns round and round?

MK: Yeah. (Laughs)

VL: Was there one above each table?

MK: They had one on trimming side, and one on packing side. One over here, on trimming side. They get one over here, da kine cross kind. And one over here, cross kind. Fan.

VL: And the fan had a light?

MK: No, the light is on top here. They have not on the ceiling but it's below. They hang it. That's the light.

VL: What about the walls? Was there anything on the walls?

MK: Nothing. It's not this wooden wall. What they call "galvanized." Tin. Even the roof, too. Even today they have that.

VL: Was that hot working there?

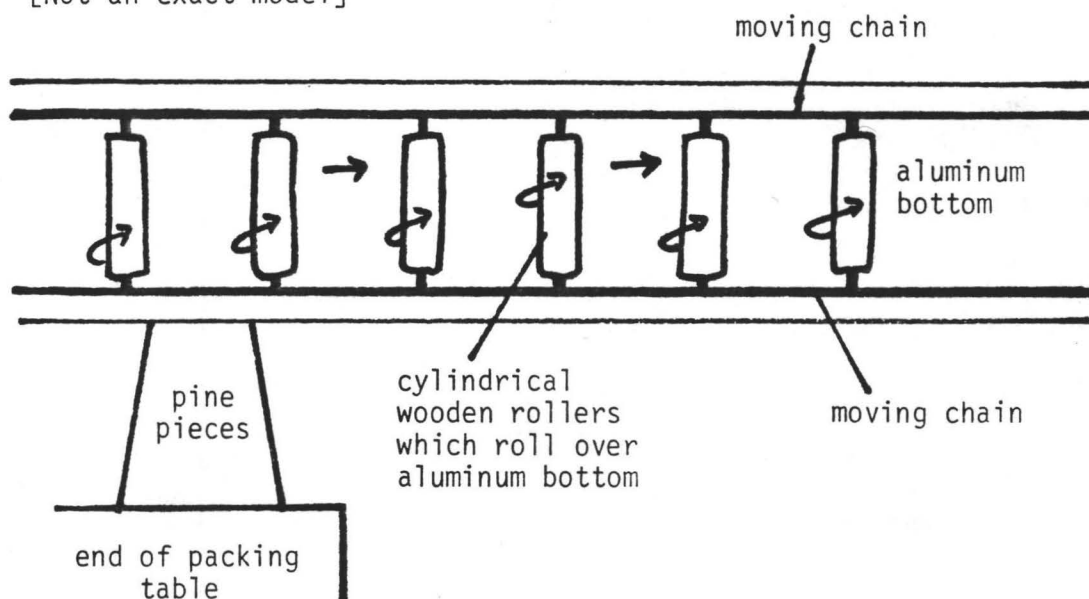
MK: Oh yeah, sometimes hot. Especially when you go the wall side. In the center part is not. It's because you had the fan on, that's why. When cool time, they turn off the fan. So when we complain, "It's hot," and then they put the fan on.

VL: Anything else about the inside of the cannery that you can tell?

MK: And this is the walkway. After we work, this is the walkway. [See previous diagram.] Inside here [a long wooden platform] they have something like that. The chains go like this, all like that under here. So she make [a grinding type] noise. When the pineapple goes in there, this thing all going carry this to "crush."

[The moving wooden rollers push the pine pieces down the conveyer belt to "crush".]

[Not an exact model]



VL: This is like a belt?

MK: It's a belt but it's not leather. It's aluminum. All the pine-apple, when we pack, the balance [whatever is not packed] drop in here [on the conveyer]; well, she [the conveyer] carries that.

VL: Where is this going, now?

MK: Now this [conveyer] going to "crush."

VL: In order for you to cross this [covered belt], you go over it?

MK: Yeah, because this is board.

VL: Board is covering it so nothing can fall through?

MK: Yeah.

VL: After you cross the board?

MK: This is the platform. See, the boys stack their tray over here [the opposite side of walkway], all. This aisle is big, so they stack whatever we pack--by trays--they stack over here.

VL: In the aisle?

MK: No, they stack outside here. So the boys have to carry that and come across [the covered belt], go on this platform and go down. And the truckers carry this and come to double seamer.

VL: Was this area that had the belt moving to crush, was that dangerous for you to cross over even though it was covered with a wooden....

MK: Well, you stand up tired for 10 hours, your feet is kind of heavy. But you have a little step over here. It's not high.

VL: How about the outside of the cannery; how did that look? Was it dirt or grass?

MK: Cement. All cement.

VL: This by the railroad?

MK: Railroad is dirt, but the whole thing is cement.

VL: Anything else about the inside of the cannery?

MK: When the whole table [i.e., at the end of all the tables], down here is our locker. I told you, we had a---I don't know what they call that. Pumping station, or what. They have a man standing there.

VL: What does it pump?

MK: I think he taking care all that electricity and all those things. And on the side have a locker room. That's our locker room there.

VL: Was it on the same floor as....

MK: Same floor, yeah. Get small locker room. And on the side had a apron room.

VL: And in the locker room there were the showers and toilets?

MK: Yeah. And locker. Everybody have locker. They had a matron.

VL: And your cafeteria?

MK: Cafeteria was down here. This is the locker room, and it's all cement. So the cafeteria is around here.

VL: Past the locker room?

MK: Yeah, past the locker room. It's not too far. Over here get stairs to go up. And get railing on the wall this side.

VL: Did people want to be working on the tables that were closer to the locker room?

MK: These people down here is closer. So this one here, they have to walk fast. Even they go over here or cafeteria.

VL: Did some people want to work closer?

MK: No, we didn't have any problem. Only we have to walk fast.

Later on--that was 1940-something--we had a flag.

VL: What kind of flag?

MK: I told you this is the trimming table, yeah? Well, there's girls come around. Each table, they put flags on. They [indicate] the time for what table to go out for lunch.

VL: What would the flag mean?

MK: There's tables all over here. For instance, this is all table. All this table cannot go one time to lunch because cafeteria small. So maybe this table go, some of the 2-1/2 tables go and some on the 2-tall tables go. So they skip [tables], one lunch. So when they come back, about 15 minutes later, they going put another flag for the other girls. So when they come back they take all the flags out. That's why, put the other girls. At first, they were doing all the time the same table [going to lunch first]. And the girls didn't like it because they cannot meet their friends. So they changed every week, rotate.

VL: These are still the early days?

MK: Yeah, early days. We didn't have any break; only lunch hour.

VL: You said only 15 minutes for lunch?

MK: No, half an hour. But the flag is 15 minutes. They go lunch for half an hour, and they come back; so 15 minutes later, they put on the other table that didn't go lunch.

VL: So every 15 minutes somebody's going?

MK: Not every 15 minutes. See, this table going lunch first. One table over here, this table went lunch. And one table over here. So this table and this table went lunch together. So when they came back, 15 minutes later this table and the other table going.

VL: So they [the first shift] get half an hour, then they [the second shift] have to wait 15 more minutes?

MK: Yeah, these girls here.

VL: How many lunch shifts?

MK: Oh, it all depends how many tables we have. We had two, that time, those days.

VL: So in other words, one table would wait 45 minutes, then? Half an hour plus 15?

MK: Yeah.

VL: What kind of flags were they?

MK: Just a flag to give a sign. That's why, the forelady watch. "Oh, this table going lunch 12 o'clock." Oh, was 11:30. So they say, "Oh, the other one going lunch." So all the table have the same kind of flag, they going first lunch. And then, when they come back, they start to work--everybody have to come back and work--and 15 minutes later, the yellow one going now.

VL: What color went first?

MK: Red. All the flag had red, they going lunch first.

VL: So was it better to be going to lunch first, or second?

MK: Well, all depend. What they figure, they don't want the first lunch girls go every day first lunch. So at times, they change around.

VL: Who's deciding?

MK: This trimming side. They have girls to put flags. They have to work together with Ginaca. We cannot go first lunch if Ginaca is [still] running. So Ginaca---see, she contact the Ginaca, and they know more or less where and where, and the boys have to go [to lunch] same time with trimming side and the packing girls.

VL: Is it the head forelady of the trimming, she makes the decisions; or who was...

MK: Outside. Ginaca.

VL: Ginaca made the decisions?

MK: Yeah, he knock the window. "This going." So she know what table. We have all numbers, so she put the flag and then she go down the line.

VL: Getting to your foreladies, when you were a young worker, when you first started, last time I talked to you you said that you were scared of Emma. How come? What was it about her?

MK: (Laughs) Well, she was a pure Hawaiian. And those days, Hawaiian people, she was so big. And her complexion is more on the colored side. Dark. And when she comes, oh, she just give it to you. You know, yell at you.

VL: About something that you had done wrong?

MK: Yeah. Or she want you to go down there, "You go that table," this and that. Well, we figure, we been working with the same person

all the time, so maybe some other table somebody absent. And then, maybe I'm on a 2-tall table. But maybe 2-1/2 didn't have, so we changed to 2-tall. So we going to have extra girls there. So she tells you go down there. And then, you don't want to go because you used to with the friends. She say, "Come on!"

And she was kind of old lady, too, you see. Big stout lady, you know. Big lady!

VL: She spoke English, too?

MK: Oh yes. And she was maybe asthmatic, too, she have asthma. And she cannot---when she have that, she have to stand end of the table relax herself little bit. When she come back---when she feel better then she comes out, ready to go. (Laughs) But later on, she was nice.

VL: Then you said that you did like the forelady named Annie. What did you like about her?

MK: Oh, she's a young lady, too. Forelady. And she talks nice. She really was nice lady.

VL: Was she Hawaiian, too?

MK: Yeah, Hawaiian. I think she have little bit Chinese, and little bit haole, I think. And pretty lady, too.

VL: So it depends on how they talked to you, then, whether you liked them?

MK: Yeah, uh huh. And we young, we scared, eh. When the machine going, and they have to talk loud. But we get used to. After they scold you, they come tell, "Oh, how you?" This and that, eh. So you feel better after that. ✓

VL: In those days, did they have section heads?

MK: No, they didn't have.

VL: Only foreladies and head foreladies?

MK: Uh huh [yes].

VL: And in those days, how did you keep your time?

MK: For timekeeper, we have a James Chun, I think his name was. He's a graduate from University.

VL: Is it that guy Kanky [Chun]?

MK: No, not Kanky. He was first there, James Chun. He was first there. He comes in the morning, take our numbers. We would be all carrying numbers.

VL: Are you already working?

MK: Yeah. He take numbers. If anybody late, the forelady have to let him know that she's 15 minutes later, or something like that. So he deduct the time.

VL: Did he just walk up and down the aisles and look at your number?

MK: Oh yes. He's a smart man, that. Ho. The new girls come, next day he know the girls' number. He really smart man.

VL: Did he know your names?

MK: Yes. Smart man, that. That's why, when he comes down, when you want to talk to him--he has a book--he fold his book and he puts it under his arm and he listen you. And when you finish, he open his book and he start. I cannot forget his name because he was so smart.

VL: Where was your numbers?

MK: In round plastic.

VL: Where were they, on your body?

MK: Yeah, over here [chest].

VL: So he would have to get in front of you to look at it?

MK: Yeah. He remember. That man's really smart man.

VL: Since you all quit at the same time, he knows how long you worked?

MK: Yes. Because they have a office in the cannery. The main office staff, timekeepers. But they have to report to upstairs. That's where they keep all in a big sheet, all the employees' name and the number, and then the time. And what the pay they have. They have, too.

VL: The timekeeper has, too?

MK: Uh huh. They come lunch hour---in the morning, lunch hour.

VL: Two times a day they check?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Did this method of keeping your time change over the years?

MK: Oh yes. Those days, the first time when I work, our paycheck, they give in a envelope. You had to go down to that timekeeper's office and cash that after work.

VL: What do you mean, "cash it?"

MK: Get our pay. So after, we go, all have to stand in line in the cannery, and you get your pay. It's all dollars [coins]. You don't have dollar currency. All dollar, 25 cents, 50 cents, like that. So it's kind of heavy, you know. (Laughs)

VL: All coins?

MK: Yeah. And later on, they changed because too many people, they lose their money on the way home. So they changed that. And some people, they don't go to bank. They don't know what bank was.

VL: What did they do?

MK: So some people, they want to take 'em home. And sometimes on the way, they lose the whole thing. So they changed to currency.

VL: But couldn't they lose that, too?

MK: I don't know. You know, when they go home they push you, rush home.

VL: Were there other changes about the way of timekeeping, how they keep your time?

MK: Oh yeah. When James passed away, then Kanky was coming as a part-time worker after school and Saturdays, he work, eh. So had little changing. He's another smart man, too.

VL: Was he related to James?

MK: No, they not. He worked till at the end. I retired, and then about two years later he retired.

VL: Did this Kanky, did he also come down and write your numbers down?

MK: Oh yeah. He smart, too, Kanky. Then we change to the back.

VL: You put the numbers on the back?

MK: Yeah.

VL: When was that?

MK: That was---I wonder when was that? 1930-something, I think. 1936 or something. Because Kanky was on the back.

VL: He made the change?

MK: Yeah. He wants white plastic with the blue number. It's round and have a pin in the back. So we can put on so he can see day and night.

VL: What was it before that?

MK: Before was one small one; hard to see, eh. So he made little bit bigger. And pin in the back and the blue number. So he wanted everybody to put in the back, so when he goes around, he just know who and who.

VL: Did he make any other changes later?

MK: And then he change the paycheck....oh, then he had some girls come around, too. They come twice a day. So Kanky does only packing side, and he has one boy on the trimming side.

VL: To help him take the numbers down?

MK: Yeah.

VL: You said two girls, too?

MK: No, had boy. Now, they have girls. After that, later on, he had girls. Because that boy, he graduated and he's promoted to the main office. So he had two girls. One for trimming, one for packing. That girl is still working.

VL: At the time that you retired, they still did this method of walking around and taking the number down?

MK: No, they discard that. They change to card.

VL: Punch in?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Do you remember when that was?

MK: That was nineteen....I think 1966 or 1967.

VL: Was just about when you retired?

MK: Yeah. They were saying they going change. They tried to cut down the timekeeper job. That's why, they really cut down the girls. They have only two girls now. They used to have four girls and two boys, plus Kanky. Too much.

VL: You mentioned before that you gave your whole pay to your parents when you were still living with them. Could they have done without that money? What if you didn't work and didn't give them that?

MK: Oh yes, they could.

VL: They could still get along?

MK: Yeah, uh huh.

VL: So they didn't need it?

MK: Yeah, yeah, that's right. But those days, they used to say that young children not supposed to carry money. Because I have brothers above me working. So actually, they didn't need it. But old people, they don't believe in children carrying too much money.

VL: Then we figured that about 1918 or so, you became a forelady. Did they classify you as a regular, or something? Did they give you a name when you became a forelady?

MK: No, we didn't have such---no names.

VL: No classifications, like that?

MK: No, we didn't have. That thing came later.

VL: Do you know when that labels or the classification came in?

MK: In 1940, I think.

VL: Before union?

MK: Yeah. Before union used to be intermittent.

VL: Seasonal and intermittent [classifications]?

MK: Yeah.

VL: You said that most of the time when you were forelady, that they found you work so that you were working most of the time. Were there times that you didn't work; when they couldn't find you anything to do?

MK: Oh yes.

VL: Would you get any unemployment compensation?

MK: No. Oh yeah, we used to get compensation.

VL: Do you know when that started, when they started to give you that?

MK: In 1938 or 1939, I think. The compensation--you know the old police station? Not by the [old] Sears; downtown. The old police station in town, was by Smith Street? No. The old police station.

VL: You would have to go downtown?

MK: Yeah. Over there was the compensation. And I even know the lady, Mrs. White. She was the head over there. Shee, we have to go early in the morning. Six o'clock, we had to go down there wait.

VL: Wait for what?

MK: Till the door to open. Because Dole and CPC [California Packing Corporation] is going there.

VL: All waiting for the compensation?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Say you didn't work for just one day. Could you get compensation for that day?

MK: No. (Pauses) I think so, yes. Yeah. Because we used to go there all the time, and we used to grumble, too.

VL: So even just one day; say, Hawaiian Pine didn't have work for you, you could go get compensation?

MK: I think so was that, because we go over there.

VL: And what amount would you get? Would it be the same as if you had worked?

MK: No. Just little bit. I forgot, though, how much was. That's why, later on, we used to get tired of going. Early in the morning, eh. And near police station. All the people going work. So we had to sit down on the sidewalk. The building was like this, and the compensation, had some office over here. We had to sit down over there. Had the steps. So we was getting tired.

VL: Say, if you didn't work three days in a row; would you have to go down there all three days?

MK: Uh huh [yes].

VL: Humbug.

MK: Humbug. That's why, we used to get tired.

VL: But sometimes they'd put you to work in the warehouse. What kind of work would you do there?

MK: You pack pine--the label is all labeled, it's canned; you put in the box. You grab by four, put in the box.

VL: Full cans?

MK: Yeah. And that was hard job. Our hands small, eh. Two and a half is big, we had to grab four one time put inside. We used to put in one at a time, but they didn't like it, the foreman. Because we're going to ruin the label.

VL: Paper label?

MK: Yeah. Going scratch, eh. So you grab one time inside. Our fingers used to be sore.

VL: Did you have a choice? Like if they said, "Okay, today you work warehouse because there's no packing." Could you say, "No?"

MK: Well, you can say no. But usually, we all go, though. Because they put all that cannery girls together--the foreladies--on one table. That's why, it's hard for us because we all of us, four of us, we don't know how to work. So they have to teach us. And the other machine, they all old-timers, so they fast. But us, we all....they had to come check our labor--after they pack, they have to check the box, see all the labels is all scratch, or what. They [the cans] hit each other. But we take it.

VL: You would rather take it than not work?

MK: Yeah.

VL: When you were working on the packing side, in the beginning when you just became forelady, how many tables did you have?

MK: Ho, I wonder how many. I know less than 14, though.

VL: I mean for yourself, that you were forelady of.

MK: Oh, to take care? Four tables. About four tables.

VL: And each table had 10 girls; that's quite a few then?

MK: Yeah, uh huh.

VL: Did this change over the years; the number of tables you had to take care of?

MK: No. That's been from the start, when I came forelady. That's the system was.

VL: But later on, did it change?

MK: Depending on the foreman. Well, Annie died, you see. She quit, then she died. She was sick. So that Hawaiian man--he's a Kamehameha School graduate--he came in. No, Harry Moss, he came in. He was our foreman. Harry Moss. And then, what was the question, was?

VL: Whether later on the number of tables that each forelady had changed?

MK: Yeah. Take two tables.

VL: Do you know why?

MK: Because they increased the tables more. They build up more because we had more pineapple.

VL: That means they had to make more foreladies, then?

MK: Yeah, uh huh.

VL: So that it's like cutting your job in half, then you don't have to...

MK: Yeah, but the pay is same. Our pay never cut down. Only you have less tables.

VL: Did you like that?

MK: Well, you gotta take it, eh, when they....

VL: Was it better, though; because you had fewer, was that better for you?

MK: Well, I guess so. You don't have to walk so many places. But even if you have more table, the head forelady is always around helping you. Say maybe you on the other table, she on this side. She always doing something for you.

VL: Does the head forelady ever pack herself?

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: Very seldom she does that.

VL: Did this fellow, Harry Moss, did he ever pack?

MK: No. He's too busy.

VL: In your early days when you were forelady, did you ever see any men do any packing?

MK: No. I know lately, they did. When I was working they demand for that. They have to know how to pack. See, when he [Moss] died, we have one Hawaiian foreman. He was a Ginaca; he came down. Because when Annie died, Emma was head forelady. So Emma worked together with these two foremen. When Annie died, Harry Moss came. And then Emma came head forelady. So he [Moss] passed away, and then he [the Hawaiian] was there. He's from Kam School. Ho, that man.

VL: Harry Moss, his title was what?

MK: Superintendent.

VL: And Annie's title was...

MK: Head forelady.

VL: I see, I thought they were both head....

MK: No. Same as this. Superintendent. And Emma was head forelady. So in other words, Emma worked together with these two.

VL: Then maybe you remember---I've read that in 1921, Hawaiian Pine started making what they called "unclarified" pine juice. Do you remember that at all?

MK: 1921? What you mean, "unclarified?"

VL: I guess they didn't filter it, or something. In 1932, they made "clarified" pine juice, but when they started in 1921, they called it "unclarified."

MK: Juice? Well, that is different department.

VL: So you had nothing to do with that?

MK: Yeah. That's different department; that's double seamer side.

VL: Did you ever hear, in 1923, that Hawaiian Pine had bought Lanai, the whole island of Lanai?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Did they tell you that, or how did you hear about it?

MK: Well, they said the pineapple coming from Lanai. So we can tell the difference from Oahu pine and Lanai pine. Because Lanai pine is so nice. And when you pack, the texture is different.

VL: How so?

MK: More firm and more nice, the texture. Wahiawa pineapple is sweet; really sugar taste. And Lanai pine is little bit watery taste. Wahiawa pine, even if you get the same size of fruit, Lanai pineapple, you can get more fancy.

VL: So you think the Wahiawa one taste better?

MK: Yeah, taste better. You can taste more pineapple like. But the color, Lanai pine is nice, too. And they're big pineapple, ho. Sometime, from one pineapple, you can take the whole slices one can.

VL: You mean the whole thing...

MK: Yeah. You can take eight fancy [slices] from there to fill up one can. When they come to huge one.

VL: But usually, the Wahiawa one, you cannot do that?

MK: All depend. We can tell the difference with Lanai and Wahiawa.

VL: How did they tell you that they were going to start bringing Lanai pine?

MK: I think one time, when I saw that the box come in from the barge, they says "Lanai pine." So sometime, I ask to my head forelady, "Eh, what kind pine is this?"

"Oh, Lanai coming in. That's Lanai pine."

"No wonder the pineapple is nice."

VL: The last interview you mentioned that around 1926 or 1930, you folks, I guess the foreladies started writing things down in a training book, like. For example, like what is fancy; you would start writing these things down so that you could train other people. You remember?

MK: No, that was 1950-something.

VL: You want to describe it to me now?

MK: You know how we learn what is fancy? We used to have inspection table. In the middle of the cannery there's a special table that had. They had one special table. That's a different department. And there, used to be the fruit analyzer, something like that. Well, he had girls worked for him. Four girls and one head forelady. That table, they had one trucker, and that boy goes to all the tables take maybe about four trays. Maybe from this table and maybe from some other table. He pick four trays and he bring over here. And they go inspect, these girls. Maybe two girls inspect the four trays. And that's how. And then they mark 'em down and they put 'em all in the trays. On long trays. And then, she calls us, what the tables are packing. Inspection, yeah?

VL: They had that from the very beginning, right?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Going to this writing down of in this training book...

MK: Oh, that was 1950-something. No, maybe 1946. It's between 1946 to 1952, around there.

VL: Who did the writing?

MK: We did it.

VL: The foreladies?

MK: No. When there's no cannery, well, we have a office. Just like one table for us. Before that, we used to have long table. But since they built an office downstairs, so they put all us, the head foreladies down there. When there's no cannery or maybe cannery

get through about 11 o'clock [a.m.]---well, we was salary already, that time. See, we cannot go home because we get eight hours pay. So after lunch, we go in the office and we write down.

VL: Did they tell you what to write?

MK: No, our own.

VL: So what kinds of things did you write?

MK: What is fancy and what is choice. And what is B's. And then this girl, later on, her name was Carey. Well, when she quit, Yvanne came in. So Yvanne has her record, too. She had all written down. Because every morning, we used to go 10 o'clock, we used to go in the sample room. See, this thing was outside. But after Carey quit and we had different boss, Dr. Mumaw. Well, you have in the back of the cannery....see, from here we walk to the dispensary and Yvanne was over here, office. Yvanne over here and the next is dispensary. So we come over here. This is inspection. So we goes over there 10 o'clock. She have all in the pan, on a table, two side. She have a pan and what they inspect, those girls. And she line up all and she tell about the errors. So we go and look the errors. But it's all cooked pineapple, it's not fresh. See, this is fresh [the inspection in the early days was of fresh fruit]. But Yvanne one is cooked. That's fresh pine, yeah. So they do away this and they make this one.

VL: These books or these writings, what is fancy, what is choice; who would use that? After you wrote down these things?

MK: That was summertime, when you have schoolteachers come in, they going be foreman, they come forelady. Help them. At least they have in their mind what is what. Of course, they been packing; the foremans, they know how to pack. So they have to wear apron and cap and gloves, and go out there, stay side of the girls with one forelady. At least they go one line. Fancy, choice, and B's. They go down the line and then that's all to it. If they want to stay there longer they can stay.

VL: Wartime, or after the war?

MK: After the war, I think. Yeah, after the war.

VL: Before the war you didn't have these schoolteachers as summertime foremen?

MK: No. Before the wartime, we had. Because [Marshall] Hjelte was our foreman. We had. In fact, all the schoolteachers used to come summertime. So sometime I go in town, some of them retired, they remember me. They was my packer. They go to tidbits.

VL: You mentioned before, too, that as foreladies you had meetings. When you were forelady. Do you remember what you used to meet about?

MK: That was 1950-something.

VL: You were head forelady already. As regular forelady you didn't have meetings?

MK: No.

VL: Okay. I'll ask you about that later.

MK: Yeah, that's later on, that.

VL: Then, I think this is earlier on. You said a lot of the workers and the foreladies were young. What effect did this have on your feelings about working there, the fact that a lot of the workers were young people?

MK: We don't feel anything. Because we wasn't married, too.

VL: You said something about a group-like feeling.

MK: No, I don't think so. We just work as the thing comes. Of course, some girls, they cry.

VL: After they were scolded, you mean?

MK: Yeah. When the foreladies scold them, they cry. Sometime the hand over here sore with the juice, they cry.

VL: Again going back to some of the changes that the cannery had; 1931, they started making the pine chunks. Did that affect you or your job?

MK: No. It's part of the whole thing. See, from over here [beyond the packing table] is double seamer. So that double seamer have different people to take charge. From over here is we take care [just packing side].

VL: So the gems and chunks were packed after...

MK: By that time this thing [the chain belt going to crush] is all gone. They remodel. So 1930-something is all remodel. All these things [overhead fans], they don't have. They have all that kind....

VL: Flourescent lights?

MK: Yeah.

VL: And they did away with the job of receiver. What took the place of this [chain belt going to crush]?

MK: They make it underneath [under floor level]. They have this kind piece of iron steel. With that, they cover. [The iron cover is floor level.]

VL: Instead of wood?

MK: Yeah. See, they have a hole [in the metal cover], so if anything trouble--that thing get [the belt] cut, broken, you know--so what they have, a small hole. And they have a hook. They hook it out.

VL: But underneath, there's still a belt going to crush?

MK: Yeah.

VL: In 1932, you had a new manager. James Dole was replaced by this Atherton Richards.

MK: Mr. White. Yeah. Mr. White was the original....

VL: Wasn't Mr. Dole the manager? Then this Mr. Richards?

MK: Yeah, yeah, that's right. Then Mr. White.

VL: Did the change in managers affect the workers in any way?

MK: No. And then came to William Quinn.

VL: Did you have your favorites? You worked under all four of these men.

MK: No. We don't think nothing of them because we down working. Only Mr. Dole, they talk so much of him, when he come, they all---you know, he smile at us and we look at him.

VL: How about these other three?

MK: They don't come. Only Mr. White, once in a while come down. And Quinn. But the other ones....

VL: You never see 'em?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Then, in about 1937, did you ever hear of these pineapple field workers on Molokai getting together and they strike? Did you folks hear about that?

MK: No.

VL: Do you remember in about 1937, one time you got 5 cents raise, and they said it was because the high cost of renting a house and so on? Do you remember that?

MK: No. I know we had a raise, but I don't know what year was.

VL: This 5 cents raise, you remember getting one?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Did they tell you why?

MK: No, we just see our paycheck. So we ask Kanky, "Eh, how come we get plenty?"

"Oh, you folks get raise," he tell me.

VL: So you only knew about it after you got it?

MK: Uh huh [yes].

VL: I think they put in the eight-hour day about 1938.

MK: We never get eight-hours day. We had any, all the hours. Eight hours, 7 hours, 11 hours.

VL: All depended on how much pine?

MK: Yeah, from the pine.

VL: Then, did you hear a few years later, in 1940, of this....on Kauai now, this United Cannery Agricultural Packing and Allied Workers of America? It's a union for the cannery workers; they signed a contract on Kauai. Did you folks ever hear of that?

MK: I heard little bit about that.

VL: Yeah, they called it, "UCAPAWA."

MK: Yeah, but I didn't pay attention because that's other island.

VL: Did you know much about it?

MK: No. We didn't bother because if Hawaiian Pine have a strike, then I would think of it. But we didn't have a strike. So we didn't bother.

VL: At that time, had you heard about the ILWU [International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union]?

MK: Gradually, we were hearing. They have this and that, this and that, ILWU.

VL: Who did you hear from?

MK: From the foreladies and the girls.

VL: What did they say?

MK: They say, "Oh, they going to have union." But they didn't expect that Dole was going have. They thought was only warehouse. So we

didn't pay attention, too, because we don't know about union. We didn't talk about it.

VL: But you folks just mentioned that it was around.

MK: Uh huh.

VL: Did you have any feelings about it when you first were hearing about it?

MK: No. I don't think---I didn't dream it because cannery is only just like intermittent. They don't work eight hours. Four hours they go home, 2 o'clock they go home. The hours are all odd hours. The union came in, then they get eight hours work or 7-1/2. And they get break.

VL: Did your friends or your husband ever talk about the union?

MK: No. They didn't know what the union was.

VL: When did you start knowing what it really was?

MK: After [1947] strike. (Laughs)

VL: When the strike happened, yeah.

MK: Then I know who the stewards work in the cannery.

VL: Before the strike, did anybody ask you to join the union? Come up and talk to you about it before?

MK: No. I know they was talking to the girls because they had stewards already. Two on a packing table, and trimming side about three, four, I think.

VL: Oh, they already had stewards?

MK: Yeah. So they were talking and they used to get meeting in the gym, outside. After work like that.

VL: Did they ever invite you to come?

MK: No.

VL: Were you ever curious about what they were meeting about?

MK: No, I was thinking what our boss would explain to us. So we didn't....

VL: Did the bosses explain to you?

MK: Uh huh [yes].

VL: What did they say?

MK: We had a meeting up at the main office, and they gave us a pamphlet, what the union is, you know. So we can read. So the Personnel [Department] explain to us. See, we don't know what to do. We had our pamphlet with us, so we follow them.

VL: Did you ever think you might join the union?

MK: That was only for intermittent and regular, see. So salary, we didn't.

VL: But they didn't make you salaried until about 1946?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Or did they make you salaried before the strike?

MK: Ah, wait now....yeah, before the strike. Because even the strike, even cannery didn't run we used to go; to make our eight hours.

VL: Do you think that if they didn't make you salaried, that you might have joined the union?

MK: I don't know. That, I didn't thought of it.

VL: Did you have any opinions on people like Jack Hall and those guys?

MK: That, I don't know.

VL: I guess I'm asking because some people said they thought about joining but they were afraid because maybe their husband worked for the military, or they didn't want to.

MK: Anyway, in the first place, like us, we salaried people, we wasn't interested. Only we hear from girls. That's all. Because the stewards don't say anything. When we went to meeting, the Personnel explain to us. So to me, it's not interest, so....

VL: Were you happy with your working conditions and your pay?

MK: Uh huh.

VL: So you would have no reason to join anyway, since you were happy?

MK: Yeah, uh huh. Because there's girls said they have to pay dues. I said, "Oh, the silly thing. You girls are working only few hours and you have to pay due." And the regulars work eight hours. I said, "No make sense." But they stay figure, well, if they don't pay maybe they get lay off or, you know; maybe the stewards going pick on them. So I didn't bother them. Because I don't know what kind of procedure they have.

VL: Then, during the [1947] strike, you folks had to work your eight hours anyway. Can you describe coming to work; were there pickets and so on?

MK: Oh, yes. We had a hard time. We didn't know they were on strike. That was early in the morning. And we had a uniform on, because the uniform must, you see. White uniform. So I wore that. And then, I supposed to meet Vicky [Hanaïke], but she's down Kaaawa. But early in the morning she comes down. See, the husband is Hawaiian Electric supervisor. So he start 8 o'clock but he had to bring Vicky down to work 5 o'clock. That's nobody there, you know. So she's in there. I said, "Shee, I wonder how Vicky going come?" I was worried about Vicky. And then, when I wen pass Robello Lane, going to work, you know where that....what you call that school?

VL: HCC [Honolulu Community College]?

MK: Yeah. Usually, we pass just below that and go down, and they have a white line to cross to Hawaiian Pine, and that's the employment office. So we was going, and then I see plenty people standing on both side, Hawaiian Pine. I says, "Oh, what is this going on?"

And I see some of the foremans, they have yellow ribbon over here [armbands]. And those two boys, they say, "Mabel, you better turn home and go home."

I say, "Why?"

"We all on a strike." That's what he says.

I say, "What? But I'm not on the strike."

He says, "No, before you get hurt, go turn around and go home."

I said, "No, I not going home. You not my boss."

So he says, "Well, you better go home, you know."

Bumbai, I see Neal Blaisdell--our Mayor--he was Personnel man [in 1947]. So he was across; I was here, he was across. So I wave like this. Then he sees my arm. He came across. All the strikers over there, you know.

And he came, and I says--after turn around--I see some of my foreladies standing. I said, "Oh, you girls want to follow me in? Let's go, I'm going." So two, three of them was following me. And then when halfway, Blaisdell came for me. Then halfway, when I turned around, they not there. They went back. So we went. Blaisdell said, "Come on, come on girls. Come on." He said, you know.

VL: Were they head foreladies?

MK: They were foreladies. I was the only head forelady, so Blaisdell came to me. "Mabel, come on; let's go."

I said, "Okay." So I asked them. Me and Blaisdell went. He passed the picket line and he told me go wait by employment office, go stay there. So I stood over there. Bumbai, later on he and I went, then I went upstairs to work.

VL: Any problem when you passed through the line?

MK: Well, the next day, I was going and Blaisdell came pick me up. And I was going. Then they had big truck of Wahiawa Plantation unions, joined that Dole strikers. When they came, I said, "What is this people all coming down?" I was kind of scared. And all Filipinos, you know. Wild looking guys. So they went across, they wen join the picketing. So I says, "Oh, I better go." Blaisdell came, I went.

When we were just the wire fence going to the Dole and near the sidewalk--we were just going inside--the line was long, you know. And Blaisdell says, "Don't you go in the property, you know; Dole's property." So they had to stay outside, and we was going. So they don't want to let us go. They all stick together.

So I said, "Excuse me."

And Blaisdell says, "Oh, let us go." So Blaisdell make like that [parts the crowd with his arms]. When he make like that I went underneath [his arms].

And one Filipino guy, he had a cigarette and he had a cigarette butt. He just make like that, hit my face. So I told Blaisdell, "That guy wen throw cigarette on my face." So he went down talk to the Filipino guy. He asked me which guy. "That guy over there."

He says, "You, how come you throw cigarette like that?"

"No, I was going throw. I didn't mean to hit her. I was just going throw and then she just came and [it] hit her face."

He said, "Okay." So Blaisdell went upstairs in main office, to his office. And he call some cops come down. And then, I don't know what he did up there. Bumbai, he came down, he said, "Oh, Mabel, I was going try to make a little fine on them." But he said forget it, because he said, "Little minors."

So he asked me if my face got burned. I says, "No, it's nothing. Forget it."

That's what happened. And then, bumbai, next day, Mr. Bown says he had one Chinese fellow....I forgot his name. From different department, he was salary, to go pick up us. Me, my sister. Get

the car, come to the house and pick us up. So we used to wear uniform and go. And then, they said when come to the gate, he told us to put our head down. Lie on the floor. Put ourself down. So we did that. We didn't have trouble.

So this fellow said---oh yeah, the Personnel, he died, Goo. You know who is that, Goo? Well, he came pick us up. He said, "Mabel, tomorrow, when you folks come, go change your clothes. Try change your clothes every day. Don't wear the same uniform. Wear other kind dress." So we start to change our dress and we went. Instead of going to that Dillingham Boulevard [entrance], we start to go on the main office. And have a guard over there so he let us pass. But oh, over there get lot of people, too.

And we was going, they said, "Oh, you scab! Scab, scab!"

VL: They called you that?

MK: Yeah, they call us, "Scab. You scab," this and that. Bumbai, they change drivers. They don't want the same drivers. So now, our boss Mr. Bown came and pick us up.

So we went in the gate, and these warehouse ladies go, "You folks stealing our bread and butter." And they go on the car, they go shake the car.

Mr. Bown said, "Don't say anything. Just give a smile." So we smile at them, they get more mad. They come on the car, they shake the car.

VL: Were you scared?

MK: Oh yeah, we was scared. But I mark all the people. Some Japanese ladies from warehouse, some men. I look all of them. I know who and who was. So Mr. Bown ask me who and who.

I said, "Oh, the two ladies from warehouse. It's not from the cannery. And the mens over there is all warehousemen, and some from double seamer." So we went.

Oh yeah, we went inside, we work. And then, strike over. So when strike over, we wore our uniform. And all the people came. We didn't make any sour face. We accept them. I say, "Oh, welcome home. Welcome home." We accept them. But this just like nothing, from then on.

VL: Did any of them feel harsh towards you?

MK: No, no. Just like nothing happened.

VL: Even though they called you "scab?"

MK: Yeah, just like nothing happened. Even the boys that had a [arm] band,

they come inside. They said, "Hi, Mabel. Hi." (Laughs)

To me, I like laugh, but no sense of laughing. So I said, "Oh, hi. How are you?"

He's Ted Kawamura. He's a boxer trainer. "Howzit Mabel?"

"Oh, fine, how you?"

"Oh, okay."

I say, "Nice to see you folks back."

He say, "Yeah." (Laughs)

VL: No hard feelings on anyone's part?

MK: No, nothing. Nothing. Was wonderful. Never get no trouble.

VL: What did you think when they were calling you "scab?"

MK: I was scared. The kind face they make. The face altogether change, you know. Ho, "Scab." and they tell, "You taking our bread and butter," and this and that.

VL: Did you think you were taking their bread and butter?

MK: I tell Mr. Bown, "What they saying that?"

He says, "Oh, Mabel, forget it. Because you not doing anything. They the one is striking. You not doing anything."

So I was scared, because they come on the car and they shake the car like that. But when I went in the cannery with our bosses, till nothing.

VL: Did you ever think that you wanted to stay home and not go to work?

MK: Yeah, you feels on that way.

VL: But you went anyway?

MK: Yeah. Because they send the driver to your home. Every time the driver change, you know.

VL: So it was you and Vicky Hanaike...

MK: Yeah. And Violet Kozuki [MK's sister]. And Helen Yamane. And Beatrice [Au], the husband take her down; because get car, yeah.

VL: So five of you all head foreladies?

MK: Uh huh [yes]. [Actually, heads and assistant heads.] And Julia

from the glove room. But they go early, you see. If you go early, well they not there. They be certain time.

VL: So it was just a few of you ladies, then?

MK: Yeah.

VL: And some men?

MK: Yeah. Well, the men, they had their own car. So many go from the main gate, you have the watchman, they open for you. But as you go inside, is all lined up both sides. Oh, good experience.

VL: Did your husband think anything?

MK: He told me not to go, bumbai I get hurt. [Husband had left cannery before the war and was working at Schumann Carriage.] I says, "Well, I'm taking chance because Personnel going to send the car, to protect us." They don't want us to get hurt.

But when the Filipino from plantation came, oh, I was so scared I was going turn around come home. Bumbai Blaisdell saw me, he said, "Eh Mabel, wait."

I said, "Eh, come, come." I was scared to cross.

VL: The five days that you went to work, what work did you do?

MK: We stay in the office, we talk. We do some kind pencil work. Kill our time, eh. Because you don't know when they need us for something. And maybe they have little special pack, like that. We do. Then, this Fruit Quality when they open cans, we go and see her. The pack.

VL: Were you doing any packing?

MK: No. She [in Fruit Quality] open cans, you see. Then we go and check with her.

VL: You mentioned that you went to the fields. This was within those five days?

MK: Uh huh. Yeah, we went.

VL: What did you do there?

MK: We went down there with the truck, carry our own lunch. Dress up hobo. Shee, we went down there, then foreman over there give us a hoe. We had to hoe-hana the weeds. The pineapple field is over here, the weeds over there, we had to dig all the weeds. Dig that out, pile 'em up one side.

VL: How did you like that?

MK: Something different, so we all was happy. Even Neal Blaisdell's daughter was with us. We all was happy. Stay all in one truck, we went there. Oh, we had a good fun. And the wagon come with water for us.

VL: Now, you'd have to pass through the lines again when you were leaving?

MK: Yeah, coming home time. Going and coming home. But most time, coming home--even going--not too many people. They start to come late, I think.

VL: How about when you got to the fields; were there strikers still there?

MK: Oh yes. Some of the strikers from Dole, the workers went down there. They saw us, "Eh, you scab, scab!"

VL: Cannery workers?

MK: Yeah. I think the stewards, I think. But some girls, you know.

VL: Who were you working with?

MK: With the girls.

VL: Just your own cannery people?

MK: Group, yeah. The foremans give us hoe; he comes with the wagon, we take the hoe, tell us what to do. And then we go to all the fields, dig those weeds. Bumbai, all finish and nothing to do, he says, "Oh, tomorrow, you folks going pick pine."

"Shee, we don't know how."

So he gave us a cane. Some girls go cut the pineapple and leave it there; and some girls go inside the aisle, put in the bag and take 'em out in the aisle so the truckers can take 'em out. Shee, that job heavy.

VL: You did that?

MK: I cannot carry the four pineapple. So I told 'em, I said, "I cannot carry this four."

He said, "If you carry two." It's going to take me longer. I going be more tired. So next day, he told me, "Oh, you going supervise the girls."

I says, "Okay, but you have to show me what to do."

He says, "Okay." So he told me, "They finish this, go to something else, and something else." And the strike finish.

Gee, we come home all with that red dirt. And dirty! Oh.

VL: Did they give you the clothes to work?

MK: No, you bring your own clothes. They give you the gloves. And the glove is not the kind---the thorns, eh, so you have to get the thick kind gloves till over here. Really hobo. Only ones we enjoy is our lunch. The work is not.

Now, those people, they pick the pine, they put on a belt. I said, "Now, they wake up to what we did."

VL: I don't suppose you ever wanted to be a field worker, then?

MK: No. You have to get used to, that.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 6-24-3-79 and 6-25-3-79

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Mabel Kozuki

March 21, 1979

Kaimuki, Oahu

By Vivien Lee (VL)

VL: This is an interview with Mrs. Mabel Kozuki. Today is March 1, 1979. We are at her home in Kaimuki.

Now, you were saying that this is a picture of the baseball team that the Hawaiian Pine sponsored? [MK had a photograph of James Dole and the baseball team circa 1920.]

MK: Commercial league.

VL: Did you know these fellows?

MK: Yeah, because my husband is in there [at the time of the photo, they were not yet married]. (Laughs)

VL: Oh, he is in there? What was your husband's job at that time when he was a member of this team?

MK: Oh, he was working in the can department.

VL: Was he some kind of foreman?

MK: Well, you could say that. Assistant like.

VL: Do you know how they chose him to be on this company baseball team?

MK: Well, he used to play for Asahi. Some of those boys play at Asahi too.

VL: Did they have tryouts for this?

MK: Oh yeah, at the pineapple [cannery's] field, Dole Field. There's a field down there see.

VL: Do you know if he was given any extra pay or something to be on this team?

- MK: I don't think so they had the pay because they were playing for the company. I don't think so, it wasn't a working day, mostly Sunday.
- VL: And how about time off from work? Did they get some time off from work to practice or something?
- MK: No, they go from after work.
- VL: And who would they play against?
- MK: They play the [Honolulu] Ironworks, [Hawaiian] Telephone Company, CPC [California Packing Corporation], and Liberty House I think. I forgot. I know telephone company, yeah.
- VL: So, you folks, the women workers would go and watch them play?
- MK: Oh, yeah.
- VL: Was that because your husband-to-be was playing?
- MK: No, no, no, some of their wives were working too yeah. But that's all young kids. Some of the boys are part-time workers. I see "Crook" [in the photo]; used to be McKinley High School, used to come after work. (Nicknamed "Crook" because of his crooked neck.) I wonder if Kanky [Chun] is in here? No, no, Kanky doesn't play.
- VL: So even though they were part-time they could play baseball?
- MK: Yeah, they could play, because after school they used to come down every day. Timekeeper. ("Crook" was a timekeeper.)
- VL: The people that you would go with to see these games, they were your best friends?
- MK: Not exactly best friends.
- VL: At that time, were your best friends cannery people or outside?
- MK: Outside. Well one of the girls used to be timekeeper, that's "Crook's" wife.
- VL: So at the time you were working, we figure this [photo] is 1924, the cannery people were not that important to you as friends?
- MK: I wouldn't say that. Work is work and we're all friends. Because this [baseball] is Sunday, you see.
- VL: So, would you do things with them outside of work?
- MK: No.

VL: But you went to the games with them.

MK: Not every time though yeah. When after the game--not this game, [James] Dole was busy, they [the baseball team] have a different manager--after the game, the season over, the people just get together and go to dinner and the wives are invited.

VL: How about the girlfriends?

MK: Yeah, them too. The wives invited. I went couple times, they're rascal that's why I didn't go.

VL: How about in later years. I'm trying to find out how you felt towards your friends at the cannery. In later years did you do things with them outside of cannery work?

MK: No, those early days, you come home Saturday and Sunday and wash clothes and clean house.

VL: How about later in life. You got married [1924] after you became assistant head forelady [1923] and so on. What kinds of things did you do with...?

MK: We went picnic with all the foreladies and relievers, I think I have some pictures over there. [Photos of the Jolly Packers Club, c. 1940's] See, that's how we does, Christmas we get together. All like this, we go picnic.

VL: That's company sponsored?

MK: Oh no, our own. This is all on our own. See, this is all our foreladies. The foreladies and relievers but no more [regular] packers. This is all foreladies and relievers.

VL: So, would you say then that after you became forelady that you had more friends within the cannery?

MK: Oh yeah. We always go picnic, or we go to island.

VL: Outside island?

MK: Uh huh. I have some pictures of that.

VL: This is all on your own then?

MK: Yeah. All our own.

VL: Did you feel pretty close?

MK: Yes, we were very close. I'm just like their mother. (Laughs)
[MK became packing head forelady in 1937.]

VL: Did they come to you with problems?

MK: Oh, yes.

VL: Like family problems?

MK: No. Family trouble I don't unless they really need me to help, then I go to the conference room with them. And then I get one of the foreman to sit with me, because I don't want to interfere [with] outside problems. If that girl, she really, she had nobody to go to, she wanted me to listen to her problems and help her.

VL: Then you would?

MK: Yeah, then I would take one of the foreman with me.

VL: Going back a little bit. We were talking about the school-teachers coming in during the summertime to help. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

MK: Well, when they come in, they go to the Employment Office and they get hired. We didn't have a training table so we assigned them to a table and the forelady teach them what to do. So, we assign all in between these girls you see.

VL: In between the regulars?

MK: Yeah, in between the regular girls. And then the following year they come, we ask all the employees if they want to join the reliever class, as an assistant to the forelady. The forelady have a blue cap and relievers have brown caps, so they go sign the application to be a reliever.

VL: That's open to anybody or just the schoolteachers?

MK: No, open to everybody, even the schoolteachers, we don't skip them, we ask them anyway, it's up to them. So we had quite many schoolteachers to be relievers.

VL: Why did the company hire these schoolteachers?

MK: That time was wartime, or before the war? Schoolteachers get nothing to do, they don't get pay, yeah? [MK is not sure about this.]

VL: How did you find they worked out as packers? Their quality of work?

MK: They have common sense so they learn fast.

VL: You also said there were some men schoolteachers that came in. What did they do?

MK: Usually foreman. The men's one, I don't know too much. I know when they come in the cannery, Mr. Healy would assign them. Some of them watched the packing table, some of them watched the "special". The "special" is the tidbits and all those things. And some of them watch the tray boys.

VL: Now they don't know anything really about the work because they're new, so who teaches them?

MK: They go around with one of the foreman, the one who works every day, the regular one.

VL: Couldn't they just have asked one of the regular women to do that job instead of a schoolteacher? She would know more, I would think.

MK: Well, I tell you. We had a lot of housewives, they work every time the cannery is there [i.e., open] and school students only come in the summer. When you ask them to go to the reliever training class we going have, they don't want to join. So these schoolteachers joined and some of the girls joined if they were there for two, three years.

VL: So you're saying that they didn't have enough people trying to be relievers and foreladies.

MK: Yeah, just because she work there long time we not going tell her "Go get your brown cap." We not going do that because they have to go through a training class. So when these girls join the reliever's training class, they still have white caps and I have one forelady to take charge of those girls. She has all the names. That's all she do, she assign one girl over here and maybe there's a forelady, they (the forelady and the one in charge) just watch her to see if she know her job. Then she [the one in charge] tell the forelady to move her down here [to a different position on the packing table].

VL: Why move her down?

MK: Because the packing is different. We wanted to give the person just the feeling of what you do when you come to a reliever. She come over here and then maybe next half an hour she move down here and then she down here and then she go to the end.

VL: So then the reliever has to know all the different kinds of packing?

MK: Yeah, because down here [at the end of the table] you have to do something different. Broken pieces, tidbits you have down here. So when she (the trainee) finish this, and she ask the forelady, the forelady move her down. And she (the one in charge) ask the forelady how she (trainee) is. "Oh, she's good, she understand," then if she (forelady) say that, she (the one in charge) take the girl away and put a different girl in the same procedure and take her (trainee) to 2-tall, 2 1/2 and 1-tall.

VL: So she learns all the different size pine.

MK: And some of those girls are on tidbits, we move those girls to packing and those [packing] girls to tidbit size.

VL: So, that's what the class is?

MK: Yeah.

VL: And how long do they have to do that to become a reliever?

MK: Oh, about three days. And then the forelady who takes charge of these girls, she goes into the conference room and she have a long table next to the secretary; she shut the door and she make a rating; she write all the comments.

VL: And then, who finally chooses?

MK: Then she calls me in when she is finished [when MK was head forelady]. She and I sit in there and we check all those things and I read what she wrote and put down. Maybe her [the reliever candidate] attendance bad, maybe her ability is good, or her attitude, she cannot take corrections. She writes that all down and we have to see how long she worked, how many years. So we check that and we sit down and then we put the rating down.

VL: So then, the two of you together decide who should be a reliever?

MK: Yeah. Then I go outside and check, see the girls. Sometime when the girls is here and there, I'm always looking around for them and I consult the forelady.

VL: Did you know most of these girls personally?

MK: Yeah.

VL: About how many of them would get to be relievers? I mean, did mostly you take all of them or?

MK: No, maybe that girl worked three summers, I take that. Maybe two summers.

VL: I'm sorry, I mean the ones who signed up for the reliever class. About how many would sign up each time?

MK: Oh, I don't know how many. Quite a many you know.

VL: About.

MK: Let's see, I get 30 foreladies...about over 20.

VL: And then out of that 20?

MK: I just pick what I want.

VL: So some of them get rejected then?

MK: Yeah.

VL: And about how often would you be having a reliever class?

MK: Once a year, just before summer. Because some like quit, some on sick leave, then we have to get replacement. The forelady have two tables and one reliever.

VL: So after the summer, relievers go back; they're seasonal relievers so they don't work after the season, is that right?

MK: You mean after summer?

VL: Yeah.

MK: They go back to school. And then the one that work all year around go back to white cap.

VL: Were most of them schoolteachers, the ones that you made relievers?

MK: No. Most of them was the ones that work all year around. So when [I pick the] schoolteachers one, I just pick the best. Maybe she work there three summers.

VL: Did you ever have any dealings with the men schoolteachers who became foremen?

MK: Oh yeah, dealing in what? The work?

VL: Yeah.

MK: Yeah.

VL: Were they above your position?

MK: No.

VL: No, they were below you. So you told them what they should do?

MK: Yeah. But see, Mr. Healy had a Mr. Bown, to take care those men. But on the pineapple side, pineapple packing and all those things, they [the men schoolteachers] come and consult me. Everything what they do, they consult me. Then they go around and inspect cans and they want me to go around with them to see if they doing the right thing, what is fancy or choice or B's.

VL: Did some ladies do this also, go around and inspect?

MK: That's the forelady's job.

VL: So these foremen and foreladies have the same job?

MK: No. The foremen have the whole house. If we have 30 tables, they have to go around and just like me in what I do. The foreladies have two tables.

VL: So they [the foremen] are sort of your assistants?

MK: Yeah. [MK later revised her answer: No. They have more responsibility.]

VL: Did you have some women assistants too?

MK: Yeah. Like Beatrice [Au], them.

VL: So Beatrice folks did the same kind of job these men schoolteachers were doing. They just needed more people during the summer then?

MK: I had two [section heads] when we have plenty tables. Violet [Kozuki, MK's sister] and Beatrice, I divide them. If I have 40 tables, I give them 20 tables and then if they have "special" on the side, that's what they (a third section head) take care. The foreladies and relievers, if they have any problems, they come and see me. If I see any problems, I let them know. (There were three section heads during the summer. Off-season, there were only two.)

VL: So the men schoolteachers are equal to Beatrice and Violet.

MK: A little bit above. At the same time they watch the tray boys too. If the tray boys are untidy or they slam the trays down they have to correct them. The men are just like foremen.

VL: Do you know if they were paid more, less or the same as you?

MK: Oh, that I don't know, I didn't ask them.

VL: Then you were saying that after the union [ILWU] came in they didn't want the schoolteachers to become foreladies? Can you explain that?

MK: Well, that I don't know, because they see Mr. Healy and then Personnel. That they don't tell me.

VL: But after awhile did you notice that they didn't hire schoolteachers anymore for foreladies?

MK: Yeah.

- VL: Could they still hire them for white caps?
- MK: I seen couple of them working. Because my job is to see we have enough workers, relievers and foreladies.
- VL: Since we're talking about your job as head forelady, maybe we can go back and talk about your job as section head, when you became section head. [MK became section head in the 1923 off season.]
- MK: The section head is just like, as you said, what the foreman does. We go around and check.
- VL: How did you become section head? You were a regular forelady then how did you get to be section head?
- MK: Well, I was taking care night shift, head forelady on the night shift. See, she [Mary Kunani] was taking care day shift and I was taking care night shift.
- VL: Okay, Mary Kunani was the head forelady of the day shift?
- MK: Yeah, day shift.
- VL: And you were head forelady of the night shift?
- MK: Yeah.
- VL: How did you get to be head forelady of the night shift [1923 summer season]?
- MK: Well, they choose me, they wanted me to go.
- VL: Who chooses you?
- MK: The superintendent, not Mr. Healy, but was Mr. Hjelte.
- VL: Do you know why he chose you?
- MK: I don't know. (Laughs)
- VL: What did you think your qualifications were for being head forelady?
- MK: I don't know. See, when we went head forelady, we never have this kind table, we don't pack the slice. We were packing only B's. That's the orders they had from the Mainland, the Army or something, so we had only few tables. Very few tables.
- VK: The night shift?
- MK: Yeah. So me and her went night shift. [MK is looking at a c. 1930's photograph of the two head foreladies of packing and trimming and all their assistants.]

VL: What was her name again?

MK: Louise Oba, used to be, that's when she wasn't married. Now she is Koike. So she and I went and we had only about 12 tables.

VL: And you were packing B's.

MK: Yeah, packing B's. And she and this two went trimming side at night [three other women in photo].

VL: Do you think the fact that your husband was working in the time-keeper's office helped you get promoted?

MK: No. I wasn't married.

VL: By then?

MK: Yeah. Yeah, at this time I think I wasn't married.

VL: But you were married in 1924, so you were already head forelady of the night shift?

MK: Mm hm. [Yes.]

VL: That's a pretty quick progress that you made. Already to head forelady of the night shift just from being forelady in just a few years from 1919.

MK: Yeah, so I pick her (Louise Oba and later one Filipino lady, too) with me.

VL: So, as head forelady of the night shift, what was your job? What did you have to do?

MK: We have to check the cans and check the foreladies, if they have two tables. We have to check to make sure she have two tables. At that time they had two tables and no more reliever [reliever position created later]. She cannot take four tables with one forelady. If the next two tables no more forelady, we have to move the forelady down this side.

VL: Do you think it was any different being forelady of the night shift and being forelady of the day shift? What was the difference?

MK: Night shift, in the evenings is all right, but when you have dinner and after about 1:30 [a.m.], the girls get tired, sleepy, so you have to go around more, to wake them up.

VL: How do you do that?

MK: Walk more, and more we're gonna inspect cans and talk with them, the forelady. We don't want them to get hurt.

VL: Did anyone actually fall asleep while they were working?

MK: Well, you can tell, the eyes are all heavy.

VL: What can you do?

MK: You talk to them, you know. You tell them, "Oh, you have to watch your pine, your pine is going down." You know, talk little bit so they wake up. That's the hardest time yeah. About 1:30 [a.m.].

VL: How about yourself?

MK: Myself too. That's why the foreman come and talk to us and we talk with them, we talk with the foreladies.

VL: Is that only summer?

MK: Only summer. [From] right after school shut down, about two weeks [later]. In those days we didn't have any training you know. They hire the girls and send them to night shift. So we had hard time. We have to pick the girls and assign the table. Some of the girls, they don't know how to wear their gloves, they wear their gloves left and right and aprons back and front. And the forelady have to teach them how to pack. Hard time.

VL: Then in the off season, would you become regular forelady again?

MK: No, [assistant] head forelady. I'd be assistant to her. [Called "section head."]

VL: Assistant to head forelady, Mary Kunani?

MK: Mm hm. [Yes.]

VL: Was that job any different? Was the assistant head forelady job--day shift--any different from your head forelady job--night shift?

MK: We had to work more.

VL: When?

MK: Night shift.

VL: Was your pay different?

MK: She [Mary Kunani] had little bit more than me.

VL: Did your pay change season, off season?

MK: No.

VL: Which one did you like better?

MK: It doesn't matter.

VL: Were there different kinds of people working day and night?

MK: Yes, night shift is more housewives that maybe their husbands can stay home take care of their children. And after supper, we used to have, depending on the hours, we get free candies, chocolate candies.

VL: The company gave you that?

MK: Yeah. The cafeteria.

VL: How about your own family now, when you worked the night shift? How did that work out?

MK: I didn't have children for long time, for six years.

VL: Then after your son was born [1929]?

MK: Then I stayed home for about three, four months, then I went back to work.

VL: So, when you worked night shift...

MK: No, by that time [after son was born] I was day shift.

VL: So, by 1929 you were day shift?

MK: Yeah.

VL: So that means that by the time your son was born, you were assistant head forelady?

MK: Yeah.

VL: And you didn't work at night?

MK: No. She [Louise Oba] went over to night shift.

VL: Now, did you choose that, to be on the day shift instead of the night shift?

MK: Yeah, I talked to Mr. Hjelte, and he knows that I have a young baby, yeah? So I think I stayed day shift about how many years (one or two years), I think and then I went back to night shift. Because she (Louise Oba) wasn't head forelady (of the night shift) that time yet, you know. Because they had only few tables so she took my place on the night shift (but she was still an assistant; there was no head forelady at night during the two years I switched to day shift: 1928-1930). Then when I went [back to] night shift, then she and I worked together, we increased the tables.

- VL: When did this Louise take your place?
- MK: I think I worked night shift one year or two years (approximately 1923-1928), I think. The night shift was short, you know.
- VL: So night shift was short, then you had your baby and worked day shift and got paid less?
- MK: Yeah.
- VL: And then, when did you switch back to night shift?
- MK: Oh, I forgot. (Approximately 1930.)
- VL: How old was your boy?
- MK: My boy was year-and-one-half or two years. Two years, I think.
- VL: When you switched back to nights?
- MK: Yeah.
- VL: So then, did your husband take care of him at night, when you were working night shift?
- MK: At times, and then I moved near to my mother. Those days, the night shift was short you know. 1937, I think, then the tables increased and increased. I stayed night shift right through, 1936, 1937, or 1938, around there. And then Mary Kunani quit. Mr. Bown was there, he wanted me to take over.
- VL: He asked you to become the head forelady [of the day shift]?
- MK: Yeah. Mr. Bown and Mr. Healy was there [when I was asked]. Mary Kunani was kind of sickly lady.
- VL: How did you feel when he asked you to become the head forelady?
- MK: Well, they asked her [Mary Kunani]. They called her in the office and talked to her. And she accepted me.
- VL: Did she pick you?
- MK: Yeah. Then they called me into the office and she was there. Then she hold my hand. Then she worked little while though.
- VL: After that?
- MK: Yeah. After they picked me, she worked little while, telling me what and what and what she do in the office, you know. She get all the foreladies' name, all listed down and the relievers' name. That was unnecessary though, but that's what she was doing so, I just took over what she did.

VL: Why was it unnecessary?

MK: Outside is more busy, yeah. So, I had this office girl--you see the picture, I had the picture with the girl--well, I picked her for assistant head but she didn't like it cause she had a little argument with the foreman. So she cried, so I put her in the office. I asked the clerk to take her because she's good you know. She did all the things for me, so I stay in the cannery because [when] I'm in the office writing all the forelady and relievers name on the list like that, off and on they call me out. So instead of staying in there I told Hilda [Yamamoto] to stay in there and write all the names for me.

VL: So Mrs. Kunani spent more time in the office than you wanted to spend?

MK: Well, not exactly. See, in the morning time when they go in [to the office], it's busy you know, outside [at the tables]. But she had me that's why she had the time to do that.

VL: But when you became head forelady, you would rather be on the outside?

MK: Yeah, on the floor. Because lot of changes come out, you see; 2-1/2 go to 2-tall and those things and we have to get girls so I would rather be outside, more help to the forelady like this. So, I had Hilda to do all the work. Because, all the names go to Kanky, you see.

VL: Is this for timekeeping purposes?

MK: Yes. Sometimes they keep all the lists too, you see. So we have to make two.

VL: She [Hilda] was almost like a secretary to you?

MK: Well.... she was a nice lady. But sickly lady. That's why I tried to do more for her because she was sickly, yeah.

VL: At any point, did you ever think that you wanted to transfer to office work?

MK: No. I didn't like that kind job, you know, sit down. And Mr. Healy and Mr. Bown, they know that we always on our feet, so they always call us up once in awhile to sit down in the office and talk to us, this and that, and what they going pack and this and that; just to relieve our feet, you know. I noticed that.

VL: Now, when you're walking all around, what exactly are you doing? Can you tell me from early morning till...

MK: Early morning we have 15 minutes, we start early. Cannery start 7:00 [a.m.], we start 15 minutes early [6:45] to go around and check.

VL: Check what?

MK: Check, well, sometimes some things are not there, if the water is running or if the girls come down too early. Then the foreladies come down 10 minutes early. We make sure the foreladies are down on the floor; if they're late, well, we just remind them to come down on time because they have to check the trays and the cans and all those things. If they do it often, those things, then we take their numbers down and give to Kanky, that she's five minutes late and this and that.

VL: Did that happen very much?

MK: Well, very seldom.

VL: And then what would you do?

MK: Then we have a section head. The section head before the whistle blow let us know how many girls they have. Just before the whistle, the girls are all on the table and I ask them [the section heads] if they have enough foreladies and relievers. So the girls have to check 2-1/2 how many girls, 2-tall how many girls? If they're short, then we ask the down side forelady to send two more girls to Beatrice [section head]. Because we divide them you see. One section head this side and one section head that side. The one that come from the ramp [i.e., the section nearest the ramp] have more girls because they going to the nearest table, if they are late. And the rest of the girls go down the other side. Girls who go the other [far] side, sometimes the whistle blew and they came afterwards. So, we ask them how come they are late and she says she was on this side and it was too full, so she's walking down here. Okay, then we put them inside. Then the whistle blow and the pineapple start to come down.

VL: And after the pineapples start coming down, are you still walking around?

MK: Yeah, then I go check the labor quota.

VL: The labor quota, what is that?

MK: That thing, when I first became section head, I didn't do that. Vicky [Hanaike] was doing that because that is on trimming side. This is the trimming side and there is one box, one long table over here, that's what Vicky used to take care. [The labor quota tanle is on the raised walkway between the Ginacas and trimming tables.] How many tables, she have all on the blackboard already and all the table numbers; 2-1/2 and whatever it is. And if the Ginaca [man who knows the tonnage] hit the window and tells them one table is going down [i.e., switching to 2-tall] and they say what table, then those girls let us know. So-and-so table is going down, they going move to 2-tall.

VL: So you're checking the labor quota with Vicky?

MK: Yeah, sometimes if 2-1/2 or 2-tall, I have enough girls, so we cannot keep any plus. So if Vicky needs some girls [as trimmers], we give Vicky. If I'm short [on packers], Vicky give me some girls--maybe she's not packer but maybe I can put her stack cans or something else. Or send her home.

VL: That's all called labor quota?

MK: Yes.

VL: Were there ever any situations when you just didn't have enough people?

MK: Yeah, sometimes, like maybe I have a lot of 2-tall, I have too many girls [because packing 2-talls takes fewer workers than 2-1/2]. If packing side even-even, 15 2-1/2, and 15 2-tall, then maybe one 2-1/2 is going down [changing] to 2-tall, going be 16 table [packing 2-tall size], then I going have too many girls.

VL: On the 2-tall table?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Then what do you do?

MK: I have to do something, I let her go clean floor or pick up damaged cans until the 2-tall go back to 2-1/2.

VL: You have to find work for them then?

MK: Yeah.

VL: You cannot send them home?

MK: If they are seasonal and noboby wants, then we send them home or ask the foreman if they want any trays to be washed. They used to wash by machine, you see, they cut the thing off. So the tray is dirty, and they have a tub on the side, way in the corner some place and these girls would wash trays. When 2-tall go back to 2-1/2, then I ask the boy to give me back [the women workers]. And all those things, labor quota had to mark down.

VL: You had to mark all this down?

MK: No, I have a girl up there [in labor quota], one packer and one trimmer. (Originally, only trimmers were in labor quota; then they had one packer and one trimmer. Later there were two packers and a trimmer.) So I go up there and tell Lily (main labor quota girl), I tell her that I have two girls washing trays so-and-so time and she mark it down.

- VL: So they have to know how long those girls are washing trays?
- MK: What they are all doing. Everybody in the cannery, labor quota have to mark that down and how many girls I have and all those things.
- VL: Now, if it is intermittents, could you tell them to go home if nobody else wants them?
- MK: No, if some intermittents go home, the other ones can go home. But, new intermittents...
- VL: The new intermittents can go home. The old ones get to work?
- MK: Mm hm. [Yes.]
- VL: Does that mean that you know how long everybody has worked there?
- MK: Mm hm. They all get in the office. If some I don't know, I call up the office. Maybe outside going say two tables going home, because not enough pineapple, but then the labor quota call into the office and let them know that two tables going home. So, then we going send seasonal home. If the seasonal all going home, and there's no seasonals in the cannery, then we call into the office and they have a list. Oh, this, this and this [intermittent] girls going home. They come out and they tell me, oh, this lady going home, you going home and so-and-so time.
- VL: So, it's all strictly by how long you've worked there?
- MK: Yeah. And even if the seasonals go home today, they have tag. Intermittents have a plastic on there and seasonal have a tag.
- VL: More like cardboard, paper?
- MK: Like cloth. So then they punch in the back of the tag, the date. That's the date that they went home. So when the next time another seasonal going home, that girl is going to come outside and look [at her tag and see] she went home that so and so day. So this [other] girl she don't have [her tag stamped] so she going give that girl [a chance to work longer]. So everybody have a chance, you know.
- VL: Now this is all only after the union came in, right?
- MK: No, no, we had this before that.
- VL: Before that you had by seniority too?
- MK: Yeah. Not exactly, well, even when I was working night shift [1923-1929], we had our tag. When we hire the girls, they have the tag already. Night shift had same tag but maybe green or something. (Seasonals' cloth tags had their names and numbers on them. Intermittents' round plastic badges only had their number

on them. Later, approximately 1947 or 1948, intermittents got rectangular plastic tags with their names and date hired on them.)

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

VL: Before the union, if you had to send someone home, would they go by how long you had worked there?

MK: Mm hm. [Yes.]

VL: So, it wouldn't help, like say if you were friends with the forelady then you could stay?

MK: No, no, no. Even before the union, seasonals have a tag, intermittents have a tag. When the office girls come outside, they look at the tag, "Oh, this girl went home one time," so she go to the next girl, "Oh, she didn't go home yet," then they stamp [her tag]. From before that [union], my days, they were doing that.

VL: Even your early days?

MK: Yeah. (They started stamping seasonals' tags approximately when Margaret Chang [another interviewee] began working in the company office--1942.) They get tags. You talking about 1940 time, around there yeah?

VL: Yeah. But you said it was even from before they had that kind of tag?

MK: Tag, tag, yeah.

VL: Well I'm talking about your job as head forelady, so it would be from the 1940's on.

MK: Mm hm. [Yes.]

VL: And then, so we got you up to after the cannery started, then you checked the labor quota, then what do you do?

MK: Then I go around and check with all the...see the packing. It's not only the packing I have, I have the "special" on the side, tidbits. See, they don't only pack this in the can; on the side, sometimes they pack gallons, on the 2-tall. And I go around and check, make sure how many get inside. Supposed to be 52 slices.

VL: In the gallons?

MK: Yeah. And make sure they put the proper fruits in there. If they packing fancy gallon, they have to put only fancy in there. And sometimes when they pack in the gallon, they going to smash that, you know, so it all depends. If the pineapple is bruised, they have to take it out.

VL: But isn't that the forelady's job to check how they are packing?

MK: Yeah, forelady job.

VL: But you used to do that too? Double check?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Do you do other things?

MK: Yeah. See, these girls they wear all cap, they have to check their hair as soon as they come to the table. They don't want no bobby pin on the hair. And they have to get all covered shoes.

They have a tally card on the side. You see the post here, the post on the aisle side, they have a little place for you to put your tally card. They have girls who come around to tally.

VL: Can you explain what that is?

MK: It's the one that they have the forelady's name and the reliever's name. And then they have a meter, but that meter was afterwards. That card had all the table numbers. If the machine stop, table 15, then she say, oh, so many minutes the Ginaca stopped. Then she have to write on this side the reason. Why they do that is because the office want to find out the time lost over there. Maybe they have three minutes lost.

VL: But how would she know why the Ginaca stopped?

MK: Who?

VL: The forelady.

MK: Because the pineapple doesn't come. Then she go ask the [trimming] forelady what happened. Then she say, the Ginaca jammed, then she put that down. The trimming side have [tally cards] too and the packer side have too. And if the girls go out, maybe she's going dispensary, she [forelady or reliever] going write down that she went dispensary.

VL: And how many minutes?

MK: Yeah. It's all written on the tally card. Maybe that table, why the pack is low, because the Ginaca stopped or trimming side the belt was broken or the packing is broken and they put that down.

VL: So, they have to time everything then?

MK: Yeah. But later on (by about 1957), they had meter on here, on this post over here. The meter is connected someplace over here that every time when the pineapple can goes out, the meter hit the...

VL: Counts?

MK: Yeah, counts. And the forelady have to go around and every hour she mark 'em down on the tally card for that hour, that they packed so-and-so.

VL: How many cans?

MK: Yeah. And then sometime her other table is more than the table that she is marking so then she check what happened. Maybe the meter is not working correct. And same time I go around and look too, you see. What this table doing and check if the machine was stopped, what did she do or something.

VL: So, you're checking the tally card?

MK: Yeah. I check with "specials" and make sure they have the proper fruit over there.

VL: Did it make any difference to you when they put in this meter instead of the forelady writing everything down?

MK: Still then they have to write because the meter is counting every hour.

VL: So they still have to write that the machine stopped for...

MK: Maybe this two tables, she is watching, she is faced like this, she is in the aisle. They are back to back. This table and the other table face this way. She have a meter and the Ginaca is feeding these you see. She have to go check the machine, writing down that this meter's slow. Then I say, "What happened this table?"

"Oh, the pineapple junk one side," she tells me. "The pineapple's not so good." So we go check, it's nothing wrong with the pineapple, the meter is stuck. So I press the light to pay attention to one of the mechanic and he comes down when we have the light on. Every table has light so he knows what table to come down to and check the meter, correct the meter, and she write down on the tally card, so-and-so time the meter corrected.

VL: So the introduction of the meter didn't affect the forelady's job that much because she was still writing...

MK: Yeah. When she have reliever, the reliever writes that.

VL: Then what else does the head forelady do?

MK: Then I walk around to check what they doing. If any information from the labor quota, I go around and work with the section head. Sometimes the girls going home sick, dispensary, and she [the section head] going be short of girls. So she call me and tell me this girl is going home, so then I tell her to send the girl to labor quota because the labor quota have to keep all the slip. What time the girl went home. She say, "I going be short," so I go look around and see if I can squeeze someplace and give to her.

VL: How did you get along with your section heads and foreladies?

MK: Oh, okay.

VL: No problems with any of them?

MK: Oh, sometimes they do, when they go lunch. They have a break of 10 minutes, so sometimes they come back late and I have to check with them what happened because the pineapple is all coming down. Half of the girls there and half of them not there plus the forelady, then I get after them.

VL: How did they like you, do you think?

MK: I don't know. [Laughs.]

VL: Never heard anything?

MK: No.

VL: Was it common for the people under you, say to give you gifts or anything? Did they ever do that?

MK: Well they do, mostly Christmas time. But, most time I try to refuse. I say never give me gift because they working hard for their money. We don't expect anything. That's in bad taste. Sometime I force them to take it home. I guess everybody is like that yeah?

VL: Like what?

MK: They like give gift. Not because they give you gift that you going get easy job you know.

VL: You think that some of them thought that if they did that...

MK: I don't know, that's what I think. I say, "You folks working hard for your money; you don't do those things." But, then every year after summer, they make this.

VL: Party?

MK: Yeah. Oh, I had a good bunch. The foreladies were really good, they cooperate, some I get after.

VL: What was the hardest part of being head forelady?

MK: Oh, well, the distance is long yeah, The cannery is so big, one end to one end, that's 48 tables. And then, they want to run more tables, then you have to...we have something like table-and-one-half. That means, when they have too many 2-tall fruits they want to make certain tables into table-and-a-half. That means we had to add more girls and the Ginaca going add one pineapple more.

VL: You mean they just squeezed together more girls on one table?

MK: Yeah. Not to squeeze, but you have enough room to put two more (girls) inside. Then that going be like regular 48 tables, you can make 52 or 50 tables.

VL: And you're saying that that's the hard part of your job?

MK: (No.) Well, sometimes you have to get the girls but you don't know where to get. So, I had to cut down some here and there to add the girls so I tried to make everybody know how to pack. Everybody have to know how to pack because sometime in emergency, we need them. Only one we had, handicapped girl, her fingers over here never had, you see.

VL: No fingers?

MK: Yeah, she had accident (not at the cannery). So they hired that girl. Mr. Healy say she don't have no fingers, so she wear gloves. So only that girl clean the floor. When the pineapple drop on the floor, she go and clean. We give her only so many section because she have to hold that scooper [dust pan].

VL: Everybody else...

MK: Everybody else have to go packing first. Even when we have the "special", no more packing, everybody have to go packing first [i.e., even when there is no packing to do, the new hires have to learn how to pack first, before working at the "specials" tables]. The training table. Some girls they don't like, you know. They say tired, to keep up with the pine.

VL: What do you do in that case, when they don't like it?

MK: Either they have to like it or quit. This first girl [on the packing table], she's counting. If you have four-three...if seven girls packing, we give them count. Long one and short, long one and short. Then everybody have to pick up their pine, then every hour they rotate. See, this end girl comes up here

and then she [i.e., first girl on the table] move down. In other words, everybody in the cannery knows how to pack and know everything in here.

VL: I don't understand that "four-three."

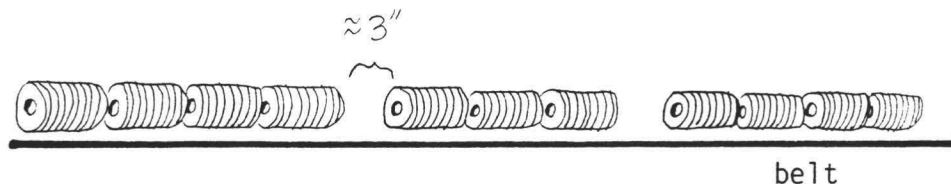
MK: Four-three. She make the pineapple, the cylinder, over here got one, two, three, four. She going count one, two, three, four; she's going to combine that...

VL: Push them close together?

MK: Yeah.

VL: This is the first packer, she does that?

MK: She's the "counter", we call her. See like this, one, two, three, four. All right, this [first] girl is counting so the next girl have to take this [first] pine and the next girl have to pick this [second] pine and the next girl have to pick this [third] pine and the next girl pick this [fourth] pine. Alright, then we going make one space, you see, make three...



VL: Why do you make the space?

MK: So the next girl [fifth packer] know...[i.e., she knows that she should take the first pine in the group of three pine cylinders]. The pineapple is coming down all like this, yeah, so you cannot tell the space.

MK: She going put it together like this so you have a space. So the next three girls going pick up one, one, one [the fifth, sixth and seventh pines].

VL: So, it's just easier to count, to know which pine to pick up because there is a space?

MK: Yeah. Before that, we didn't have the counter. Everybody packed, so when the pineapple come like this, then she can pick and this girl she can miss the pine and she can pick, then the last girl going have two, three pine for her.

VL: So they changed to this?

MK: Yeah. (In approximately 1952.)

VL: Who...

MK: Mr. Bown. He comes along with me, you see. We go around and see all the jam. Sometimes the girls down here [at the end of the table] they grumble, and we hear that. We come on this side and watch. So, we talked it over and decided we would count. One girl. Bumbai the other foreman say why don't we make electric eyes over here. Make one, two, three, four and then stop. But we were trying that but trimming side have to cooperate with us. You see, trimming side have a chain, so [if] they can put all one, one, inside like that, then they alright [i.e., one pine in between two prongs]. But when they have small one, they going double up this and this [put two pines in between the two prongs], the chain is so that she can put the two small one in one place. Then the electric count going be all haywire...

VL: If it's electric eye?

MK: Yeah.

VL: So, it's better to have this counter person?

MK: Yeah, but they rather have electric eye. We tried while I was there but the girls get so excited, something new. Then they say, "Oh, we have electric eye we cannot look around." (Laughs)

VL: You were observing all the problems, yeah?

What do you think was the biggest problem for the packers?

MK: In what?

VL: In packing, the process of packing. Maybe, you noticed that there was a lot of problems in doing a certain part of that packing?

MK: Oh, we have to check the girls to make sure they putting this in this can here, the proper fruit.

VL: Is that where the most problems came?

MK: Yeah, cause they want the quality. Fancy have to be fancy and when they say fancy, they don't want trim, they don't want blemishes and all those things. And they want color.

VL: Maybe from the girl's point of view. Where do you think that they felt the big problem was? Maybe speed was one thing, they thought maybe it was too fast or something like that?

MK: Well, the girls, when they sit like this, they don't want to be moved. Sometimes they [the foreladies] say they want a certain girl or she has too many girls so we ask the forelady, "Oh, you

have too many so we want one girl." So she ask these girls and they don't want to move, they want to stay at that table. So I say, "All right." Every time and every table I go, that's the kind of problem I hear. So I say, "You the forelady over there, if you cannot move the girls, then rotate the girls. If this girl moves out today, the next day if she comes back, the next day this next girl goes. So everybody has a chance to move."

VL: So from the girl's point of view, that was maybe a big problem, that they didn't want to leave their table?

MK: Yeah.

VL: So that made it more fair then?

MK: Yeah. Rotate. Every place rotate, even "special." They have a pan to put the pineapple inside and they have to scoop that up with a stick [stick goes through the hole in the pine slice]. The stick have so many inside. The have to have, wait now, how many slice on 2-1/2? Fifteen [slices of 2-1/2 size] I think, one gallon. The stick is just like that, with a round thing on the handle. When you hook it like that, you just put in the machine [that turns the slices into tidbits] and that amount is what goes into the gallon. So that girl cannot do that all day, so they rotate every one hour or half-an-hour. So then she goes on the other side and receives the gallon and the next girl goes up [rotates] and one girl pushes (the gun which cuts the tidbits). They all rotate and they like it. Instead of same girl doing all the time.

VL: So you think that everything in the cannery is pretty fair in that way because of the rotation method?

MK: Yeah, that's what I think, because that's the thing that takes time. You see, sometimes she have plenty girls and she wants to move the girl away, the girl don't want to move. You have to stand over there. I say, "Oh, I'm waiting for the girl."

Then she's gonna say, "You go."

And she say, "I don't want to go."

And the next girl say, "Oh, I don't want to go, I want to stay here." And I know they doing that. I cannot be standing over there wasting my time. So then I started that on all the tables I go, I started that. The forelady's have hard time moving the girls and they grumble afterwards. I said, "All right, you folks are going to move the girls by rotation. Everybody go take chance." Then they start to go.

VL: Did you make any other changes like that when you were head forelady? New methods of working?

MK: Oh yeah.

VL: What else did you think of?

MK: Well, on the tidbits, this is packing side. On the packing side, they used to put gun over here you know? I don't know if you know what the gun or what? The tidbits gun. See, from over here [a pan full of pine slices], they scoop up the pineapple, no packing; scoop the pineapple and put it in the gun. And then they used to get tray and they have a table over here. Then they have a belt over here. But the belt is not running. They feed the can in here, so each time the girl outside here, one girl standing on the stool over here, she push, you know.

VL: Pushes the gun?

MK: Yeah, and it [the tidbits] goes in the can over here. This girl have to pick up her can every time and push in there (under the two funnels that release the tidbits). So, I told the foreman, "Instead of the girl picking up the can, why don't you have a slow belt. So then when the can goes to her, she don't have to put her hand inside, the can will go directly in there."

VL: And then they did that?

MK: Yeah. Then they took the machine away and opposite, down here they made. You went in the cannery? You folks see the cannery?

VL: Briefly.

MK: The cannery was running?

VL: A little bit.

MK: Oh, oh. On the side, you didn't see any tidbit machines?

VL: They were doing chunks that day.

MK: Oh, oh. You went last year, you said?

VL: No, a few months ago.

MK: Oh, the cannery is all changed. The tables is less than one half. We used to run all of 40 to 50 tables.

VL: When they started doing less and less packing, were you still there, at that time, when they were cutting down, using fewer girls, more machines?

MK: No. We had a chunk line, but I used to use four, five, six girls, one operator, one tray boy. That was the beginning. We packed quality, the ends we used to strip.

VL: Did the introduction of the can coming automatically instead of on trays with the tray boys, did that affect your job (introduced approximately between 1958 and 1960)?

MK: No, only trouble is that the can is coming down and they have a belt. The belt is moving and the belt, all over here have this [wire guides to bring the cans directly in front of the packers], in front of the girls. But, sometimes the belt over here, the cans get stuck [in the wire guides], so we remind the forelady to shoot the can down. Sometimes they get stuck inside here, you see like this, they get stuck. And that thing sometimes takes the girls time and she have to push it down. If possible, I don't want them to touch this can. I rather the foreladies to help them out. If it's stuck too much, then we call the mechanic. Maybe they have a little knob over here that's why the can is sticking. Or maybe the belt over here is a little bit on the side that's why the can goes on the side and comes down. See, this thing takes time, you have to check this thing, the belt.

VL: Was it more efficient than the tray boys?

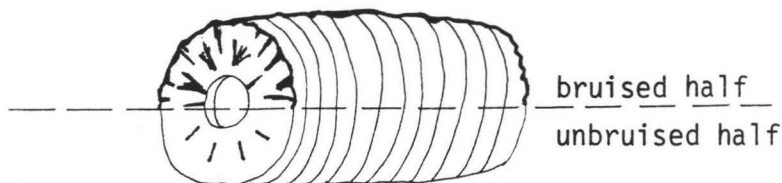
MK: Yeah.

VL: What was the biggest change in your job as head forelady over the years that you worked there?

MK: This is one change [from tray boys to wire guideways].

VL: Yeah. How about the biggest change that affected your work?

MK: I get more work....You see this picture, it's only packing you know. There's a lot of things on this side: cutting B's on this end [of the] table, they have whole slice [left, after everything else has been packed]. Sometimes the pineapple is overripe, the Ginaca hit the pineapples so much, and the trimmers trim and come to packing, all the top [i.e., the bruised side] falls down.



Overripe, and they bang too much so the pineapples going be all bruised up, cracked over here. And come to the slicer, they cannot pack this and it goes down here [to the end of the table] and we have a broken gallon, we used to put it in there [i.e., gallon of broken slices].

Later on, I was talking to Mr. Healy one day. I see Mr. Healy was coming so I talked to him because this pineapple, underneath

is all nice pineapple, like fancy, and here we were picking up all the B's and all the trimmed kind and putting in the gallon cans and all the good one all going in the crushed. So I told Mr. Healy, "This fruit cannot, if they can make it...I don't know what to say, instead of making the whole..." I talked to Mr. Healy and I said, "I collected this from all the girls coming down," and showed him that they were all nice quality. I asked him, "Can we put one machine on the end of the table, up high like this and only half-kind machine, not the whole machine. So that the half pineapple can fit in here and have a slicer to make it into B (that fit in a 2-1/2 can) or tidbits. [The slicer makes the broken pieces into uniform half-slices.]

He says, "Oh Mabel that's, a good idea." He went into the office and he called Dr. Mumaw. He [Dr. Mumaw] came down and they talked it over and they told one of the mechanics to try and make one sample. So they did the sample and they had it on one table and we tried, cause Dr. Mumaw is the one that wants anything in the can to be quality.

So he [Dr. Mumaw] said, "Okay, let's try."

That thing pass so all the tables on the 2-1/2 we had that. [That machine is called a B cutter.] That's only the half one, you know, not the whole slice.

VL: Okay, so they could pack the halves.

MK: Yeah, for tidbits (and they could can the broken B's in a 2-1/2 size can instead of a gallon can).

VL: Did you get any kind of reward for making this suggestion?

MK: No.

VL: Did you make any other suggestions?

MK: Well, that the can should be done this way instead of picking up [the can] from a tray and take the tray away, put [the can on] the belt and have it go directly. [Described in previous pages.]

VL: Did you get a reward for that?

MK: Yes. (\$25.00)

VL: Did you have more [suggestions]?

MK: Well, I didn't want to take it too much. I asked the foreladies if they had any ideas and if they have some, they get reward and they said, "Nah".

VL: Okay, most of the time you had men as your superintendents, right? Was Dee Dupont the only lady?

MK: (Nods yes.)

VL: Okay and then she came in...

MK: Nineteen forty-eight or 1950 something.

VL: Can you tell me what were the problems with her that eventually led up to the [1957] walkout?

MK: Well, as I say, Mrs. Dupont wants to change things too fast. See the tally card on the side over here, she wants the girls to put [it] in their pocket.

VL: Yeah, how come she wanted that?

MK: Well, she wants that thing to be with them all the time.

VL: So they can write on it?

MK: Yeah. So I told her don't do that because she have to mark [when] the Ginaca stop. And sometimes when the machine stops they have to tray off (i.e., put filled cans on empty trays and have the truckers take them to the double seamer like in the old days--instead of automatic transportation) and [count] how many trays, how many stacks of trays went out. All those things have to mark down. But she want to try that so I didn't bother. The girls they don't want to put in the pocket so they put it in here [in their dresses] like this, and I didn't like it. Like this and every time they had to take it out like this you know. I said, "I don't want you folks to do like that. You folks put it back and I'll talk to Mrs. Dupont." They all put it back, but Mrs. Dupont didn't like it. Then she talked to me. So I told her, "Mrs. Dupont, why don't you leave the tally card the way they were doing it, and later on maybe if you have a better idea then we can talk it over and do it."

VL: Had she just come to work?

MK: No, she come around, walk all around.

VL: I mean, had she started to want to make these changes right away?

MK: Uh huh. She go to the trimming side...

VL: What other kinds of changes was she pushing for?

MK: She wear gloves. She come in the cannery. She go to any table that she wants and then I guess she report that too many round slices going down [to crush]. See these girls packing and then the round slices go on the belt so she go down here to [the end of the table]... around here and she go pick up all the round ones and she put it in the can. She [Mrs. Dupont] push the can; you see, when they pack they have to push the can to go onto the belt. So when she push the can, they [the foreladies] watch to

see whose can is going down. So they follow the can, then they pick the can and put it on the side and line them up for me to see. They get the can and come to the end of the table and they call me. They want to see me. I say, "What happened?" They say for me to check the can. About six cans, you know.

VL: She packed six cans?

MK: Yeah. They want me to check. They say, "Mabel, you check this for me." And then we have on the table, just like a hook.

VL: On the edge of the table?

MK: Yeah, for when they pack the B's, they put on the tray on the side and they have the hook and the tray just like this.

VL: Oh, the tray hooks onto the table?

MK: Yeah, just like this. Then the packer's over here. They say, "Mabel, will you check these cans?"

So I look. I say, "What happened?"

She [forelady] says, "This is supposed to be choice."

And I say, "Oh my goodness, this is not choice."

She [Dupont] had put the thin slice and the small kind all in there you know.

VL: But they were round slices?

MK: Yeah, round but trimmed and then the forelady told me to take all the bad ones away. And they said, "Mabel, do you know who packed this? It was Mrs. Dupont."

So I put all that back and I took the can, I went to her office, the conference room. I talked to her, "Mrs. Dupont, this pineapple that you packed in here, I didn't like it."

She said that she didn't pack it. She said, "Oh, I didn't pack that."

I said, "Yes you did; the forelady just told me."

She said, "How does she know that's my can?"

"She told me she followed the belt to this can and she wanted me to check."

And then I talked to her and she said, "Oh, no I didn't pack."

I said, "Yes you did because that's what they say and this can, I don't like it, you're not putting the proper fruit in here. You

let this go inside there and then it's going to be covered and cooked and it's going to the sample room and Yvonne picks this can, then 10:00 in the morning the next day, we going look at this can." And they going call Dr. Mumaw to come check that because that's what preparation is doing. Dr. Mumaw is going to think that the whole cannery is doing that. Who gave the permission? So I told her that this was not right. So I called one of the foreman to come and see and said, "Oh, you better stop her from picking up the pineapple."

VL: Was this foreman above Mrs. Dupont?

MK: Yeah. So I told him he better stop her. So they told her to go to the trimming side and go look and so that afternoon, she went on the trimming side.

She insist you know, but I didn't see, but the forelady told me. She just grabbed this can and that table had all intermittent. I said, "Don't tell me that the intermittents, all these years, they packed like this inside here." We have a wagon inspector, you see, go all the tables. We have two wagons. That's why the girls got mad.

VL: The foreladies? How about the regular packers?

MK: The regular packers, they don't know because they were packing. She goes from table to table to pick up. She just happen to come to this table and the forelady grabbed her can.

VL: Were there other things that she did, like the time card?

MK: Yeah, she go inside the office and she have her own desk right near our desk and she have one secretary. She want to do a lot of changes. I think Mr. Healy stopped her, I think.

VL: What kind of changes?

MK: I don't know. Every time she call me into the office and she asks me this and that, this and that, what I do, the rating, how I hire the girls and all like that. So the office girl was telling me, "Eh, Mabel she going take your job."

I said, "That's all right, if she like, she can have my job." And she go on the trimming side. Yeah, she was going a little bit going too far. I told her many times but, I don't know.

VL: So what was the final reason why this walkout occurred in 1957?

MK: That I don't know. They figured they was going to take my job and Vicky's job or something like that or Yvonne's job. Maybe she wanted to take the Preparation, you know, she like control the place.

VL: Do you think that they thought she was controlling you too much?

MK: I guess so.

VL: How did you feel when you found out that they weren't going to come to work?

MK: Who?

VL: The packers. This is the walkout.

MK: They didn't walk out, eh?

VL: Two days. One or two days, they didn't work, over that.

MK: Oh, I think they didn't want Mrs. Dupont to come in the cannery. They want her to be in the office all of the time. Yeah, that's why she didn't come out of the office. Every time she call me in. I was getting . . . "Shee, Mrs. Dupont, you're taking all of my time. I'm busy outside." She say for me to rest my feet.

VL: What do you think the packers were demanding when they walked out?

MK: I don't know. I don't know why they walked out.

VL: You didn't have too much to do with that?

MK: No.

VL: But, after the walkout, did she stay on as superintendent?

MK: Yeah.

VL: Did things change, about her, after that?

MK: Yeah, she stayed in the office. And then she was going to take us to her house. She had an apartment on the Ala Wai and she was just fixing her house. She wanted to put in a lot of new furniture, she wants to make just like a Japanese floor. Instead of rug, she wanted to put mats and all kinds of shoji doors. She told me she wanted to call us to have dinner with her and that night, I heard she shot her head.

VL: The night you were supposed to have dinner?

MK: Yeah. That night or couple days later, she was going to make dinner and then we heard that she shot her head.

VL: Was she still superintendent at that time when she shot herself?

MK: She wasn't superintendent, huh? Mr. Healy was the superintendent. She was Maui.

VL: What was her position at Dole then?

MK: She wanted to be superintendent. [Dee Dupont did not have an official title; she was somewhere between head forelady and Preparation Dept. head.]

VL: Oh.

MK: Nice lady you know; I hear she was a senator, yeah. Smart lady you know, but she go too fast. Every day or every afternoon something is changing, you know. I used to tell her every time, "You cannot do that. Because, I worked with the girls too long. You just came in here, you cannot do that."

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 6-25-3-79; SIDE ONE

VL: So around 1952 or 1954, you folks started having a desk in the office for the foreladies, yeah?

MK: This is only for section head and for head forelady.

VL: And what would you do in the office at your desk?

MK: This is off season. Cannery shut down for maybe one month or maybe two weeks, like that, then you go in there. Then we go check up all what the tally card.

Yeah, tally card is the one the end of the packing table they have.

VL: What do you do with them when you check them?

MK: We look at the tally card. Some foreladies, we look and say, "Oh, this forelady, she's so untidy. Her work is not good. She always erasing the tally card and then she mark 'em down." And when the cannery start, we go around check that person.

We tell, "Beatrice, you'd better check that forelady. Make sure the tally card be neat."

Sometime the office call the labor quota and let us know that so-and-so card is all messy, you know. Make sure she get new tally card, clean one because they have to check that count of the cans go up, yeah. And then we check the foreladies' attendance and the girls' attendance and then we...

VL: This is all when the cannery is not busy?

MK: Yeah, uh huh.

VL: So when the cannery is busy during season, who does all this work?

MK: That's the girl I told you, Hilda.

VL: Oh, oh.

MK: Every day they're marking down the girls and they have a call that says so-and-so girl, number, and the name is absent. Then when she has a list, absent, absent, she let me know. She says, "Mabel, this girl's attendance is bad." When she comes to work, then I call her in the office and I talk to her.

"Why your attendance are so bad."

Then she gives me the reason. If the reason is good, I think, well, you cannot help. Then she call in every day so we excuse her. If she don't call, then we let her know (if she was a seasonal), "If you keep on doing this, we have to lay you off." And then just to remind her, a warning, then they come good.

VL: And you mentioned you would be calling girls from your office after they gave you the telephone.

MK: Yes, yes.

VL: Who were you calling and what for?

MK: Calling the girls to come to work. So-and-so girl come to work or leave the message to let them know that---maybe she's out in town and the daughter answer or the son, children answer---we try to get more of that grown-up to answer to leave the message.

VL: This is all off season?

MK: Yeah, uh huh.

VL: They didn't know beforehand whether there would be work the next day?

MK: No. You see, when the cannery shut down maybe for two weeks or one month, we let them know ahead of time the last day of the work, "We going notify you people."

They say, "Okay." And sometimes we call them and we leave the message and maybe they forget to give the message. She don't come work. Absent, you know. So we always write it down---the name we call or call but nobody answer or you call back or call so-and-so number or call our home, yeah.

VL: Now, you're also rating people? Is that every person or...

MK: Every person.

VL: The plain old white caps, too?

MK: Yeah. Plain white cap and the foreladies and relievers. Almost season over--not almost--we ask the foreladies how this girl. That's why we are going around to check all these girls every day how they work and then we talk to them and then move these girls around, see if their attitude is good or bad and then rating time come. Before they quit, we do the rating because the office let us know just when these school girls going quit, you see. Intermittents, they work all year around so we get time but we rate seasonals.

VL: And this goes on their record in case they want to be hired next year?

MK: Uh huh, uh huh. [Yes].

VL: Do you actually write or you just give them a rating of 1 through 5 or something like that, a number, or do you actually write comments?

MK: Yeah, comments.

VL: Does that mean that you know every girl by name?

MK: Mostly because you know how we know the name? Because every week I pass the paycheck. While they working, you put it in the pocket for them and they have a tag on the side, yeah.

VL: You had a big job.

MK: Yeah, sometimes the main office, these two men come down and see how we passing the paycheck, you know, because every Friday we pass. We go around the whole house, tidbits and everything. Vicky [Hanaike] going trimming side and I go packing side. I have a girl come with me. She have a big rubber band---plastic, then we have a tray like this. It has all the cards in there and the paycheck in there.

VL: Did this have the money inside?

MK: No, not money. It's one card (i.e., check).

VL: And then they would cash it in later?

MK: Yeah. Before that, we used to give money but they stop that.

VL: Over the years on the packing side, some people told us that they felt the line got faster. The speed of the line, the packing line got faster. Did it actually get faster?

- MK: I think they talking about table-and-a-half. You know, I told you, eh, they can add so many girls and add more fruit from Ginaca. That's table-and-a-half.
- VL: As far as you know, the actual speed of the pines coming by...
- MK: Got faster. Right now, I know it's different because they're running chunks. Chunks you don't have nobody to pack, just go into the machine. Machine do that work. Cut 'em.
- VL: Could it be that there's fewer girls on the table so they have to work faster?
- MK: You talking about just lately one or...
- VL: No, they just said that over the years from the 1930's until nowadays, they seem to have to work faster.
- MK: Yes, maybe slightly.
- VL: Do you know at the time that you quit what the speed was...
- MK: Oh, I forgot.
- VL: ... of pineapples coming out?
- MK: If the table run table-and-a-half, on the tally card shows, you know.
- I know they say now the pineapple run really fast but I don't know how fast.
- VL: Going back once again to the time when you started playing badminton. Can you tell me how that got organized?
- MK: That one was from maybe the foreladies or after work, you know. (It started around 1935 or 1940.) Foreladies going to the gym. We come to the employment office and it's open for everybody, for employees and boys can play.
- VL: Where would you play?
- MK: In there.
- VL: In the employment office?
- MK: Yeah, they have a gym. On our way out to home. They have a gym there in the employment office. They had a big gym there. [Gym was used when large numbers of people were being hired.]
- VL: Were there other things that you could play?

- MK: Oh, you can play volleyball, basketball....
- VL: Did very many people participate in sports after work?
- MK: Mostly Hawaiian girls, yeah. The other ones, they rush to go home cook. (Laughs)
- VL: How about you?
- MK: Yeah, well, I used to join them, to exercise. These girls, they're mostly country girls, yeah. Nanakuli and Waipahu....
- VL: They weren't in a rush to get home?
- MK: Yeah. Well, when cannery get through early, maybe 2 o'clock [p.m.] and....
- VL: Were there organized teams?
- MK: Well, inside there---whoever comes in, then they divide. We cannot stay in there too long because if Personnel close, they have to close the gate, too.
- VL: Was it something like having actual competition?
- MK: Well, sometimes we used to say loser going treat lunch or, treat this and that. (Laughs) Only for the fun to....
- VL: But would you folks, say if you had the volleyball team, would they compete against another cannery or....
- MK: No.
- VL: This is all in...
- MK: Yeah, only the employees. The trimmers and packers, yeah.
- VL: I also heard about the library, there being a library there.
- MK: Yeah, uh huh. Mrs. [Jean] Stevens was one of them, librarian.
- VL: Was this after the war or...
- MK: No, I think before the war, they had, yeah. They have in cafeteria.
- VL: Did you ever use the library?
- MK: Yeah. You use.
- VL: Like when would you use it?

MK: That's when maybe you go lunch. I use mostly non-cannery time.

VL: After work?

MK: No, non-cannery. Lunch hour or break. We get 10 minutes break so instead of going locker room, sit down, foreladies' locker room, we go in there and sit down and read books.

VL: Could the regular workers use that, too?

MK: Yeah, oh yes. Anybody could.

VL: I would think that might encourage you to stay longer on your break instead of going back to work.

MK: No.

VL: Do you remember when the credit union started?

MK: Oh, credit union start nineteen thirty . . . because wartime, the credit union was just going start or something like that.

VL: Did you join it?

MK: Yeah, uh huh. All the employees can join.

VL: Did you ever use it for borrowing money?

MK: No. The girls do that, yeah. Regular workers, intermittents and all those.

VL: How about when you bought this house? Did you need...

MK: No.

VL: How was this financed, then, your house?

MK: Oh, from State loan.

VL: So what is the good that the credit union?

MK: I didn't have enough in there.

VL: How about for your son's education?

MK: Well, we work and he work summertime. He work, three summers, I think.

VL: Financially, your family got along all right?

MK: Yeah, uh huh.

VL: What other things were there for the workers to join? Like you had the sports and credit union. Were there other benefits?

MK: You mean the employees?

VL: Yeah.

MK: I don't know what they had. Maybe they have their own club or something like that, yeah, because we, we had our own club, foreladies and relievers.

VL: Oh.

MK: That's the party I showed you.

VL: Oh. Was there a name of that club?

MK: What do you call that..."Jolly Packer." (Started in the late 1940's or early 1950's.)

(Laughter)

VL: And who started that?

MK: Well, they was talking about it and they consult me. Says, "Mabel, it's good to have at least Christmas get together," you see.

I say, "All right, why don't you girls make a club then?"

And then we get together. One day cannery got through early. We sit in the locker room and who wants to, you know. We pass the word--the foreladies and relievers--no, no was foreladies only and they says they like it so I says, "Don't pick on me for anything. You folks pick your own selves."

And they said, "All right."

And then, who came president was? I think we made one forelady president but she died already, Catherine. Until today, they have. They ask me yesterday to go someplace, someplace, [today]. They going have luncheon and they ask me if I want to go.

I say, "No, I have an appointment."

VL: So they still ask you....

MK: Uh huh. [Yes].

VL: Was it a dues paying....

MK: Yeah. The beginning was 50 cents, I think, yeah.

VL: Every month?

MK: Yeah, every month. So they have a president, they have a vice president, secretary collect the money.

VL: Would you folks do anything else besides parties?

MK: We would picnic. Go Ala Moana Center. Sometimes we go country-side.

VL: This is the group that went outer islands, too?

MK: Yeah, uh huh.

VL: So talking about how many people?

MK: Well, I have I think 35 foreladies, plus section head. And those foreladies, summertime they come forelady and off summer, they come white cap. We include them in, too, you know. So we had about 40. Then we ask the office staff because they were packer with us so we ask them. They still having...

VL: So later on at the time this club was formed, would you say that those became your good friends or did you still have outside friends?

MK: Well, with the club like this---whatever I say, they always willing to do things and they never says, "I don't want to do that." I mean about the working things. They always agree. Then I think there's about two---sometimes she don't agree so I took her in the conference and we talk it over and make her understand and then she understand. Then we agree. I find out myself and this group is very understanding group and have a lot of cooperation. They never hate each other and fight each other.

So I was talking to this girl. "Why don't we make a club, you know, after summertime or Christmas. Especially Christmas---this is a Christmas party, you know, get together. Then you people be more close, you know."

And they says, "Okay." That's why we have this club.

So I used to tell them, "You girls join the club. Anybody don't want the club, it's up to you girls to quit, you know. We not forcing you girls." So some girls, they have no ride and car, yeah, so inconvenience for them so they stay little while and they quit. Only a few of them, though. And these girls they all---even about their family---maybe the family, the children get married or the grandchildren's birthday, they always invite us. Most of the foreladies, yeah, because to me, I figured maybe they in the club so they all close, yeah.

VL: What do you think if you had not ever worked in the cannery? You wouldn't have all this group of friends. You think your life would have been....

MK: Changed, yeah, different, yeah.

VL: Changed.

MK: That's what I think. This is so many people go in and out. Intermittent have so many and summertime, school children come and they grown up and when they see me, they say, "Oh, Mabel, I worked in the cannery."

I say, "Oh, yeah, I know you."

VL: What would you say was the best part of all your years in the cannery? What was the best part about your job?

MK: Well, to me, I have good bosses and different department bosses. They were good and to me the bosses are very good. They all educated people but they are really---they come in the cannery, they go cafeteria. See, they get different cafeteria. You know, one cafeteria but salary people one side. All the bosses, yeah, and the regular workers this side. You can eat this side but they all went the other side and we used to go over there.

VL: Which side would you go on?

MK: The bosses' one. We came salary so we can go over there drink coffee or break time, yeah. We get more friendly with them and before that, all these bosses, even the vice president or president, they go to lunch, they always come down in the cannery. They don't go the other way. They come to the cannery, walk in the cannery and look or maybe they smile to us, you know, and they go away to the office. And sometimes in the afternoon, they come down to the cannery to see what kind of fruit we have and they always talk to you. Really, the people were very nice. That's the people all in the picture [her retirement picture].

VL: Besides money, what would you say you gained from working at the cannery?

MK: Working hard.

VL: That's good or what? (Laughs)

MK: You have to love the people working with you and if the bosses are good, your attendance going be good. I have a pretty good attendance, you know. Sometimes my boss have to send me home. I have a cold, yeah. I go dispensary and sometimes the nurse says, "Mabel, you better go home and rest."

I say, "No, I cannot." So she give me some medicine and tell me so many hours. Maybe they [bosses] come outside, I blowing my nose. Tell me go home. (Laughs) Yeah, the bosses were very good, understanding.

VL: Did you enjoy working?

MK: Uh huh. [Yes.]

VL: Did you ever think of quitting?

MK: Oh, one time. That's the time when cannery was just---Mr. Bown came in, I think, yeah. The cannery was very slack.

VL: And you weren't working much?

MK: Yeah. That time, we wasn't salary (i.e., before 1946). The cannery was slow. Maybe two hours work or four hours, five hours.

VL: Where did you think you would---you thought of quitting?

MK: Yeah, uh huh.

VL: And doing what?

MK: Well, going see at Lewers & Cooke, if I can find some job over there. I don't know what kind job. I guess that's the time they say that's a woman's change in life, yeah.

VL: Oh, yeah.

(Laughter)

MK: Mrs. Hatchell, the nurse, and Mr. Bown don't want me to quit.

VL: Was it that you had a relative at Lewers & Cooke that could get you a job?

MK: Uh huh. (My brother-in-law.)

VL: As a what?

MK: I don't know what.

VL: Oh. But you think you could have gotten a job outside?

MK: Well, that's the chance I took if get. But he told me it's hard because they're not hiring anybody.

VL: Why did you stay at the cannery?

MK: There's no job [outside] and then they call me and then the cannery had work so I didn't quit, you know. So when cannery work, she says, "Oh, so-and-so day get cannery work," so I went back to work.

VL: Oh, I see. It was one of those lay offs? And you were thinking of going elsewhere.

MK: Yeah, yes.

VL: Was it because you needed the money?

MK: No. I didn't want to stay home. (Laughs)

VL: And you never thought about going to another job again after that?

MK: Yeah. Then Mr. Bown gave us job to clean, paint the [packing & trimming] tables.

See under here. And trimming side have to paint too and scrub so Vicky [Hanaike], me, and Helen Yamane---Vicky take care the packing side. We take care this side. Paint with small brush to make our eight hours work.

VL: This is before you were salaried, yeah?

MK: No. After I was salaried. I think just after plantation (strike in 1947), they give us job. The odd kind job so the boys used to get mad.

VL: Why?

MK: Because we taking their job. (Laughs)

VL: Why do you think Mr. Bown did that?

MK: I don't know. Sometimes he sent us go in glove room go help patch gloves.

VL: Do you have any feelings about the future of the pineapple industry in Hawaii?

MK: I was thinking look like they going more on the real estate like.

VL: What do you think about that?

MK: I don't know. I have stock. The stock is pretty good, you know.

VL: Oh yeah. Have you had these stocks for a long time?

MK: Uh huh. Ever since I was a single girl. When they had the old building, the main office. They want employees to buy. That time, I think I was forelady or something, I think, so I just bought two share.

VL: How much was it then?

MK: Fifty dollars [\$50.00] one share. Now I get 80-something or 90-something [shares]. (Laughs)

VL: You think it's a good place for women to go to work?

MK: That place, even school children who don't want to go college, just graduate high school---if they work over there and if there's any opening in other department, I think they should go.

VL: You think it's a good experience for people?

MK: Yeah, uh huh.

VL: How about making it a career like in your case?

MK: Well, this one here on the packing side---you know, once in a while they have a bulletin come out, you know. So-and-so department they want a typewriter, telephone operator or personnel. If the people see the bulletin and if they take the job, I think that's good. It's just the same as they outside. This office staff, this Kanky them, all them like that, school kids was [at one time], Kanky them and all this even "Crook" and even the baseball player ---where the baseball picture---see inside here? These boys all college and high school graduate. Kanky, "Crook". "Crook" is timekeeper for warehouse. Kanky is the head timekeeper and Frank Tyau he was working down the main office and he was transferred to Wahiawa office. They all get good job, these boys but this was long time ago. Chip Loo, all of them. They all retired now.

VL: Do you have anything that you want to add to all what we've talked about?

MK: As you say, for the future, I think Dole the future is not bad for the young people to go work over there, yeah. Yeah, they have an IBM machine there. Credit union, of course, is different department. Personnel, they get salary; personnel and salary now is combined with trust company. See, now they merge, Dole and the Castle & Cooke, yeah. Yeah.

VL: If you had your life to live over again, would you have done the same thing, gone to work at Hawaiian Pine...

MK: Uh huh. [Yes.]

VL: ...and stayed all those years?

MK: Uh huh, but providing what kind of bosses you have.

VL: Okay. Well, do you have anything else?

MK: I don't know what you want.

END OF INTERVIEW

[Note: MK added the following information to her transcripts.]

Between approximately 1930 and 1933, Hawaiian Pine Company made special orders of pineapple candy, called "glassy candy." Six girls were trained to select firm, not overripe fruit for the candy. A Mr. Morley was in charge of that.

In about 1946, Hawaiian Pine Company made frozen fresh pine chunks. They were packaged in cardboard boxes similar in size to the frozen vegetable boxes we see in supermarkets today.

Starting in about 1947, Hawaiian Pine Company made pineapple spears for four years. [Other interviewees have given different dates for this.] Fancy pine cylinders were selected from the 2-tall trimming table and taken to a packing table in the center of the cannery. There, six or eight girls took off the choice and B parts and put the whole fancy cylinder on a belt running into the slicer. One tray boy operated a machine that cut the cylinder into eight lengthwise fingers. These fingers went directly into 2-tall cans. Tray boys then stacked the trays of filled cans, and truckers took them away to the double seamer.

In approximately 1950, during the off-season, the company sent the head foreladies, assistants, and foremen to other Oahu canneries, California Packing Corporation and Libby's, to observe their operations. They were also sent on day-long trips to Kauai and Maui canneries. These trips, plus lunch and dinner were paid for by the company. Mabel remembers that the Kauai cannery had about six tables. The Maui cannery, with 12 tables, was congested and steamy. She felt that the trimmers had to work faster there than at Hawaiian Pine Company. They also went to the Wahiawa fields to learn things that could be helpful to the packers in particular.

Around 1952, Hawaiian Pine Company began making canned tropical fruit cocktail. The mix included pine tidbits, diced papayas, and diced bananas. The papayas and bananas were purchased from outside the company. About 14 girls and one forelady worked on it. A machine sliced the papaya in half; the girls scooped out the seeds and another machine diced it. The same girls peeled the bananas and put them into a dicing machine. These diced fruits were mixed in a pan with pine tidbits and then put on a belt. After each use, the pans were washed. About four girls then packed this mix in cans. This product was discontinued in about 1955 when the company had a hard time getting papayas.

**WOMEN WORKERS
in Hawaii's
Pineapple Industry**

Volume I

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